

AN EVALUATION OF THE *SOZO* INNER
HEALING MODEL IN THE CONTEXT
OF A LOCAL CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

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This study, a mixed model research project with a phenomenological strategy of inquiry, tested the effectiveness of the *Sozo* inner healing model within the context of Church on the Sound, Long Island, NY, measuring four attributes: depression, anxiety, intimacy with God, and forgiveness. The hypothesis was that individuals participating in a *Sozo* session would experience inner healing in the form of freedom from hurts and wounds, and experience greater intimacy in their relationship with the Trinity as a direct result of their *Sozo* session. The results demonstrated the *Sozo* model to be effective in these areas, thus confirming the hypothesis.

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First of all, I want to acknowledge and thank Joanie, my wife. For over thirty-six years she has been my best friend and a constant source of encouragement and inspiration. She continues to amaze me with her childlike faith, joy and unbridled optimism. Without Joanie's constant encouragement and confidence I would not have been able to complete my thesis.

I want to thank my Pastor, Nicholas Seeberger, Senior Pastor at Church on the Sound. When considering this program, I asked Nicholas if he thought I could do this project. His response was: "Absolutely. You have the horsepower to do this." That comment helped keep me going when I was convinced I was in over my head.

I am deeply grateful to the *Sozo* team at Church on the Sound for their passion for God and their commitment to seeing people set free through the *Sozo* ministry. This project is a record of how God has set people free through the labor of the Church on the Sound *Sozo* team. I am indebted to my mentor, Dr. Paul King. Dr. King's calm demeanor was the perfect complement to my sometimes exuberant personality. His guidance and encouragement was a tremendous help during this entire process.

Lastly, I would like to thank my three children, Joshua, Jennifer and Elizabeth. Your belief in my ability may not be completely objective but it remains a great source of encouragement. I love you all.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my incredible wife Joanie. You truly are an amazing gift from God. More than any other person you have taught me what it means to be loved and what it means to serve God with joy.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADAA	Anxiety and Depression Association of America
ATGS-9	Attitude Towards God Scale
BDI	Beck Depression Inventory
COS	Church on the Sound
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
DASS	Depression Anxiety Stress Scale
FMS	False Memory Syndrome
OCC	Operation Christmas Child

INTRODUCTION

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) states that 6.8 million adults suffer from Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) (persistent, excessive and unrealistic worry) in any given year.¹ The ADAA also states that anxiety disorders affect “40 million adults in the United States 18 and older.”² The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that “about 9 percent of adult Americans have feelings of ‘hopelessness, despondency, and/or guilt that generate a diagnosis of depression.”³ This equates to over 28.5 million people.⁴ The ADA observes that “at any point in time, three to five percent of people suffer from major depression; the lifetime risk is about seventeen percent.”⁵ According to CDC “major depression is the leading cause of disability for Americans between the ages of 15 and 44.”⁶

¹ “Generalized Anxiety Disorder,” Anxiety and Depression Association of America, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/generalized-anxiety-disorder-gad>.

² “Facts & Statistics,” Anxiety and Depression Association of America, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://www.adaa.org/about-adaa/press-room/facts-statistics>.

³ “Stats and Facts about Depression in America,” *Everyday Health*, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://www.everydayhealth.com/health-report/major-depression/depression-statistics.aspx>.

⁴ This figure is based on *U.S. News and World Report* population statistics at the end of 2013. “The 2014 U.S. and World Populations,” *U.S. News and World Report*, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/robert-schlesinger/2013/12/31/us-population-2014-317-million-and-71-billion-in-the-world>.

⁵ “Depression,” Anxiety and Depression Association of America, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/depression>.

⁶ “Depression,” Anxiety and Depression Association of America.

The mental health problem in this country is not going away. *Psychology Today* reports that \$11.3 billion dollars is spent each year on antidepressants.⁷ Between 1996 and 2005, the use of antidepressant drugs in the United States nearly doubled.⁸ *The New York Times* reports, “The number of Americans who receive Social Security Disability Insurance for mental disorders has doubled during the past 15 years.”⁹ It is estimated that mental illness “will become the second leading cause of disability worldwide in the next decade and the most costly of all illnesses.”¹⁰ Clearly this is a problem in need of a solution.

The medical community is not ignoring this growing problem. In 2013, \$2.2 billion was spent on mental health research with \$415 million of that on depression research.¹¹ While therapy and medication can help individuals control their anxiety and depression, they do not provide a cure. These methods simply allow an individual to control their symptoms.¹² Medications typically help the individual to manage their depression, rather than cure it.

⁷ “Real Healing,” *Psychology Today*, accessed November 29, 2014, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/real-healing/201202/do-anti-depressants-really-work>.

⁸ “Antidepressant Use Nearly Doubles in U.S.,” *Consumer Reports*, accessed November 29, 2014, <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/news/2009/08/antidepressant-use-nearly-doubles-in-u-s/index.htm>.

⁹ “The Half-Trillion-Dollar Depression,” *The New York Times*, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/02/magazine/the-half-trillion-dollar-depression.html?pagewanted=all>.

¹⁰ “How much do Americans spend each year to treat depression,” *Sharecare*, accessed November 29, 2014, <http://www.sharecare.com/health/depression-treatment/how-americans-spend-treat-depression>.

¹¹ “Medical research: If depression were cancer,” *Nature International Weekly Journal of Science*, accessed November 29, 2014, <http://www.nature.com/news/medical-research-if-depression-were-cancer-1.16307>.

¹² “Treatment,” Anxiety and Depression Association of America, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/depression/treatment>.

Does a cure exist? Can individuals be set free from depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders? Does the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross provide hope beyond that which medical science offers?

Unbroken tells the story of Louis Zamperini, an Olympic runner who enlisted in the Air Force in 1941 to serve his country. Eventually he becomes a bombardier on a B-24 in the South Pacific. In April 1943, during one of his missions, the plane crashes and all but three crew members are killed. Louie and two others spend weeks on a raft in the Pacific Ocean, trying to survive. Eventually, Louis and Phil (the pilot) are captured by the Japanese; the third crew member died at sea.

Over the next two years, Louis endures inhumane treatment at the hand of his captors. The POW facility is controlled by a man the POWs nickname Bird, a sadistic Japanese guard who mercilessly assaults Louis both physically and emotionally. The nightmare Louis is experiencing finally seems to end when Bird is transferred to another POW camp. Louis is finally free from Bird's constant beatings. Hillenbrand comments that when hearing about Bird's transfer, Louis "felt almost out of his head with joy."¹³

Louis' joy, however, was short lived. In March of 1945, he and many of his fellow POW's are transferred to a POW facility at Naoetsu. Much to his horror, he has been transferred to the same camp as Bird. Louis would remember the "moment when he saw Bird as the darkest in his life."¹⁴

Eventually the war ends and Louis returns home. He gets married and tries to start a new life. However, he cannot escape the physical, mental and emotional scars that Bird

¹³ Laura Hillenbrand, *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption*, random house trade paperback ed. (New York, NY: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2014), 270.

¹⁴ Hillenbrand, 277.

inflicted upon him. Not only is Louis suffering physically, but he is also suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He begins once again to train for the Olympics when his ankle gives way, the result of the physical beatings from Bird. Louis' Olympic career and his dreams are shattered.

Unable to cope with his condition, Louis descends into alcoholism. No longer able to focus on the Olympics, he turns his focus to Bird. So great is his hatred for the man who ruined his life that he now makes it his dream to go to Japan, find Bird, and kill him.

Louis' life continues to spiral out of control, consumed by his alcoholism and his anger. Eventually his wife, Cynthia plans to divorce him as he is making life miserable for all those around him. It is September 1949, and a young evangelist named Billy Graham begins to hold tent crusades in their area. Cynthia goes to one of his meetings and returns having experienced a religious awakening. She decides she is no longer going to divorce Louis. Eventually she convinces Louis to attend one of the crusades. During the altar call, Louis starts to head for the exit. He then remembers a promise he made to God while he was stranded, dying on his life raft: "If you will save me, I will serve you forever."¹⁵ Louis surrenders his life to Jesus. He goes home and throws his alcohol, his girlie magazines and his cigarettes down the trash chute. He is forever changed. Louis Zamperini is no longer the "worthless, broken, forsaken man that the Bird had striven to make of him. In a single, silent moment, his rage, his fear, his humiliation and helplessness, had fallen away. That morning, he believed, he was a new creation. Softly,

¹⁵ Hillenbrand, 375.

he wept.”¹⁶ In a moment of time, one encounter with God accomplished what all of the therapy available to man could not do. God was not interested in teaching Louis how to manage his pain. Rather, He was offering Him an exchange: God’s redemptive love for Louis’ pain.

So complete was Louis’ transformation that he went back to Japan to face his former captors, not with hate but with the love and redemption that only Jesus offers. Can *Sozo* bring freedom to people, as Louis Zamperini experienced that night in 1949? That is the question that this project attempts to answer. This project evaluates the effectiveness of the *Sozo* inner healing model. In a *Sozo* session, the client is guided to hear from God regarding wounds and lies in their life. As the lies are replaced by truth, the client is healed.

Chapter one provides the personal and ministry context for the project. It details how inner healing became the focus for the project. It provides background for Church on the Sound (COS), the ministry context, and describes how God brought the *Sozo* ministry to COS.

Chapter two provides the biblical foundation for the project. It examines how the lives of four individuals—Jacob, Gideon, Paul, and the woman at the well—were changed through divine encounters. While the nature of their encounters varied, in all cases the individual encountered God in a very personal and meaningful way, forever altering their lives and those around them.

Chapter three provides an historical basis for *Sozo*. It chronicles inner healing through the history of the church. The historical foundation focuses on the life of John G.

¹⁶ Hillenbrand, 376.

Lake, a powerful man of God whose life was marked by powerful encounters with Him. The historical foundation shows how Lake's powerful ministry was a direct result of his consecration to God.

Chapter four provides the theological foundation by focusing on the Trinity. One of the major tools of *Sozo* is the Father Ladder. Through the Father Ladder, the *Sozo* client is brought into greater intimacy with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Developing and maintaining intimacy is key to a life of freedom from bondage. A Trinitarian view of God is foundational to the operation of the *Sozo* model.

Chapter five examines the theoretical foundation. In chapter five, various methods of obtaining inner healing are evaluated. These include Christian inner healing, Christian counseling, and psychology. Secular models are also evaluated.

Chapter six describes the action research project that is the focus of this thesis. Here the research design and methodology are explained along with the project and its results. Chapter six chronicles what actually occurred during the project including the data and its outcomes. It provides insights into the effectiveness of the *Sozo* model along with reflections on the project and suggestions for related future research.

CHAPTER ONE

SYNERGY

Introduction

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18, 19)¹

One of the common themes in Scripture is freedom. Jesus came to set people free spirit, soul and body. This includes freedom from sin, sickness and emotional bondages. Throughout Scripture we see God freeing people from the bondages of their past. Often an identity change is required before the individual can enter into their God given destiny.

In Genesis, God changes Abram's name (exalted father) to Abraham (father of a multitude) prior to Sarah becoming pregnant with Isaac. Jacob wrestles with the angel who changes his name from Jacob (deceiver) to Israel (one who has striven with God). In renaming Jacob, God is changing not only his identity but also that of an entire nation.

In Judges 6, the angel of the Lord appears to Gideon, and declares, "The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior," which is in complete contrast to how Gideon views himself. God must first change how Gideon sees himself before he can step into his destiny and deliver the Israelites.

¹ All Bible references are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) unless otherwise noted.

The fourth chapter of John chronicles Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman at a well. The woman is surprised that Jesus talks to her as the Jews consider the Samaritans to be beneath them. Jesus speaks to her about Himself as living water. He later tells her that she has had five husbands and her current companion is not her husband. He then reveals Himself to her as the Messiah. It is striking that Jesus reveals Himself to someone who by all accounts of that day, did not qualify. Yet His love and acceptance of her, despite her past brought healing to her. It is clear that God's healing is available to all.

In the Gospel of John, the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-10) was freed from the guilt and condemnation of her past. The woman with the issue of blood was healed in Mark 5. Jesus stopped to speak to her and called her daughter. When she touched the hem of His garment she was healed physically. When He called her daughter, she was made whole. The Scriptures paint a very clear picture of a God who is interested in making people whole of any and all brokenness in their lives. The Bible declares, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." (2Co 5:17). God desires to free us from past hurts and bondages so that we can live lives of freedom.

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of the *Sozo* inner healing model within the context of Church on the Sound (COS), a local nondenominational church in Stony Brook, New York. *Sozo* was brought to COS out of a desire to see people set free through encounters with the Trinity.

COS is located in Stony Brook, NY which is on Long Island. Founded in 1985, COS continues to be a church where all can experience the love of God through worship,

the love of the people, and the various ministries within the church. COS is currently the only official *Sozo* ministry on Long Island. Since its inception in December 2012, the COS *Sozo* ministry has provided the ministry to hundreds of individuals from Long Island, New York City, and the surrounding areas.

Spiritual Autobiography

My journey began at Brooklyn Jewish hospital in May 1954, the younger of two children by four and a half years. At the age of five, the family moved from Brooklyn to Long Island. Long Island was a good place to grow up. The spring and summer were spent playing softball with the other boys in the neighborhood. In the fall the focus would shift to football. It was a simple but enjoyable way to grow up.

Dad worked hard and provided well for the family. His mission in life was the care, feeding and protection of the Wattoff family. Despite his success in business, he never wanted to be ostentatious. Much of this was a result of growing up poor during the depression. When he was sixteen, he had to go to work to support his family. Throughout his life he lived with a fear of lack. He would regularly go around the house adding up the family's liquid assets, including what each of his two children had in savings. This made an impression on a child, raised with an overwhelming fear of not having enough money.

Few Jewish children in our community were raised in observant households and ours was no exception. Nevertheless I did go to Hebrew school for three years, which was the requirement to have a Bar Mitzvah. Hebrew school instilled an understanding that God was big, awesome, to be respected, even feared. Much of the Sabbath service

was in Hebrew. Many of the rituals that were performed seemed to lack meaning.

Hebrew school left me with the impression that there was a God who was big and powerful, but mysterious and unknowable.

While Hebrew school taught me that God was big, my father understood that God was good. More than once he would tell say, “We need to go home and thank God.”

After accepting Jesus as Lord, it was easy to believe in the goodness of God because of the example set by Dad.

As with many Jewish families, education was considered of paramount importance, and college was not optional. Being good in math and science, I decided to study engineering at Georgia Tech. Going away to Tech was a great experience.

As a junior at Tech, I became friends with a girl named Terry who was a Christian. Terry was different from anyone else I had ever met as she acted as if she actually knew God personally. This was a strange concept to someone who grew up primarily amongst Catholics and Jews on Long Island.

One night, while speaking to Terry in her room, two girls from a local church came by. They were discussing the Lord and asked what I thought about the Lord. “I’m Jewish,” was the response, expecting that comment would be sufficient to end the conversation. On Long Island, everyone was considered Gentile or Jewish. The majority of Gentiles were Catholic. Jews did not believe in Jesus, Gentiles did. An individual was one or the other and you did not cross over that line. They replied, “Why don’t you ask God if Jesus is real?” That was a potentially dangerous question. Jesus was not a popular figure in modern Judaism. Would this question anger the Almighty? After pondering this for a minute and concluding that He probably would not mind; I agreed.

I did not fast or pray or go on some journey to find God. I simply asked Him if Jesus was real. The question regarding Jesus was not fueled by any depression or unhappiness. It just seemed that it would be important to know if Jesus was the Messiah. Logically speaking, why would one not want to know? That was the entire motivation. Over the next few months, it became increasingly clear that Jesus was real. Almost forty years later, it is still difficult to explain how I knew: I just knew.

That summer, I visited Terry. Sitting together on a picnic table on July 4 (Independence Day) at three in the morning. I told Terry that Jesus was real. No sooner were those words uttered when I suddenly became drunk, but not on alcohol. Unable to move, it was clear that this had to be God. What else could it be?

Eventually the feeling subsided and I went back to where I was staying, not sure what to make of what just happened. Looking in the mirror I was extremely disappointed that I looked the same. I was different and knew it. I knew nothing about the Bible, nothing about becoming a new creature in Christ, but I knew something very significant happened and life was now different.

Later that day, Terry took me to her family picnic. Her whole family was fanatical Christians. They were so happy and loving, the whole experience seemed surreal. They shared about the Lord and stressed that the Bible was true.

Returning home, I bought a Bible, started reading it, and began a personal journey with God. While much of the Bible seemed strange, I applied what I understood and it seemed to work. It was an adventure. I never knew you could live like this. I had never met anyone who lived like this. I actually thought I had discovered something new. I did not go to church, because on Long Island almost all of the churches I knew of were

Catholic and I had no idea if Catholics were Christians. So I kept reading the Bible, walking it out the best he could.

Not everyone was excited about this discovery that Jesus was the Messiah. The rest of the family was not thrilled, but other than a few debates with Dad, they left it alone. Some of my Jewish fraternity brothers had a problem with this newfound Christianity. Being a bit of an outcast was not a problem. I had found a new life and there was no looking back.

Returning to Georgia Tech, I still did not go to church. It was not rebellion, just ignorance. In March, I went to church with Terry at her recommendation. When the service ended there was a small group of people receiving prayer for healing. One of the people receiving prayer was a man whose arms had been paralyzed as a result of a stroke. Doc Horton, the pastor, laid hands on this man's head and prayed. God healed the man and he stuck both arms high into the air, praising God. Doc put the microphone in front of his face and said, "Say thank you Jesus for healing me." The man responded, "Thank you Jesus for healing me." Just then the man's wife walked over looked at Doc and said, "He can't talk." Doc looked at her, looked at the man, once again put the microphone in front of his face and said, "Say thank you Jesus for healing me." The man responded, "Thank you Jesus for healing me." Doc started laughing, looked at the man's wife and said, "Well he can talk now."

Seeing the miracle was a thrill, but not a surprise. It simply reinforced what the Bible had said, what it had promised was in fact true. The experience simply corroborated the accounts of miracles in the Bible. The Bible had become a personal word from God, rather than a history book or a book of theology. It was not just true in a philosophical

sense; it was a book that could be relied on, knowing that if God said it, He was faithful to fulfill it.

Four years at Georgia Tech was followed by two years of graduate school in business at Carnegie-Mellon. While at Carnegie-Mellon I met a girl named Mary, who introduced me to her sister and my future wife Joanie. After graduating from Carnegie-Mellon, Joanie and I were married and began our adventure with God as husband and wife. We moved to the Midwest to start a life together. We started work and Joanie went to a Bible training center in the area.

Joanie and I would go to parties with students from the school. Some of the students had the attitude that those who did not attend the school were second class Christians, who had nothing of value to offer. If I offered an opinion on a subject, they would sometimes walk away, not answer, or act as if I was not there. Being unprepared for this treatment contributed to an increasing pain of rejection that resulted from these episodes. The more it happened, the more I would respond out of the hurt, which only made matters worse. The fact that there were other friends did not matter. The fact that everyone faces rejection also did not matter. The rejection was all I could see. I had faced anti-Semitism growing up, and rejection from my family and some of my Jewish fraternity brothers for getting saved. I was no longer Jewish as far as they were concerned. Now I was not spiritual enough for some of the Bible school students. It was beginning to look as if I did not fit anywhere.

Despite the struggles with rejection, God continued to show Himself faithful. Three weeks into a new job, which was three weeks after the birth of our son, a circuit panel at work caught on fire. I had to take my boss to an emergency care center after he

burned his hands extinguishing the fire. While in route, God spoke and told me to pray for him. I responded, “no.” I had a new job, a new baby, and I was not going to lose my job over this. Somehow God was not impressed with this reasoning. He once again said to pray for the man and once again the response was no. This silent conversation with God went on for a third time, when I finally asked the Lord, “What if he doesn’t get healed? What do you want me to do? Tell him to stand in faith? He doesn’t have any.” This argument failed to sway the Almighty who once again said to pray for the man. So, I looked at my boss, put my arm on his shoulder and almost mumbled, “I need to pray for you.” I prayed a very simple prayer, “Be healed in Jesus’ name.” As soon as the prayer ended, he looked at me and said, “There must be something to your prayer. All the pain left.” Upon hearing this I was more relieved than anything else. I had read about signs and wonders and had seen them at church, but this was the first personal experience with a marketplace miracle. This was to become a pattern for life. I had several instances of God answering prayers at work. In fact, there was one woman who was saved as a result of all this. She mentioned to my boss regarding a machine that was broken, “You might want to get Geoff to pray for that.” His response was, “Yeah, and it might work.” At the end of his three years there, I had the pleasure of leading him to the Lord.

A year after Josh was born, we moved from an apartment into a house. God miraculously provided a loan that was half the prevailing interest rate. Despite the low interest mortgage, money was tight. I never had to worry about money growing up. What I did not realize was that Dad’s fear of money had been passed down. Years later, God spoke and said, “Much of your childhood was stolen through sickness and fear and I am going to restore it.” It was only then that I realized how much the fear controlled me. At

times, the fear of going broke was overwhelming. I had the idea that God would meet the family's needs, but only if we were near perfect stewards. This created an almost unbearable pressure. Finally, after much prayer, God revealed the lie for what it was. From this came the understanding that freedom sometimes comes only when the lie, the root of the problem, is uncovered. Once the lie is exposed for what it is, it loses its power. When the lie is replaced by the truth, the result is freedom. As one of the foundations of *Sozo*, this was a critical lesson.

Miracles became more and more the norm. One time God healed a broken heater core in our car with French's mustard. Another time there was a tornado in the backyard, which left without doing any damage to the neighborhood. We were in a church that expected the miraculous and were enjoying the fruit of that culture.

After three years in Tulsa, a better job opportunity required the family to move to Houston where our twin girls were born. While in Houston, the adventures with God continued. Several people were healed, and subsequently saved, at work in response to prayer.

One of the more unusual miracles involved a pick-up truck. Walking into the sales trailer one day it was apparent that Ann, the sales secretary, was noticeably upset. It turned out that her pick-up truck was stolen (it seemed that everyone in Houston had a pick-up truck). Without realizing what I was doing, I looked at her in front of several people and said, "Don't worry about it, I'll get it back for you." I seemed to be hearing the words as they were coming out of my mouth. Realizing what had happened, I tried not to look rattled, turned and left.

I was now in the company parking lot wondering what had happened. Thinking about it for a minute I remembered that Jesus spoke to the mountain, so I decided to speak to the pick-up truck. I spoke to the pick-up truck and commanded it to come back to Ann in the name of Jesus. They found the pick-up truck three days later, undamaged with five brand new tires still on it.

One year later God led the family to move back to Long Island. It was several months before I found a job. By this time, we were in dire financial straits with three children, including twin girls in diapers (cloth diapers to save money). There was no money, and no credit cards. There was not even enough money to keep gas in the car to commute to work another week to receive the first paycheck. Joanie had just put the last cloth diaper on the girls. Being out of detergent she had no way of washing the diapers. She told the Lord, "You have to do something." A little while later a friend knocked on the door, looked at Joanie and said, "The Lord told me to give this to you," and handed her ninety dollars. While the friend knew I had just started work, no one knew how extreme this financial predicament was.

This whole experience of New York was incredibly painful. I felt like a complete failure, having let the family down. I had never experienced financial hardship growing up and it was terrifying. The stress took its toll on our marriage. We had found a good church, but it was an hour's drive from home. Between church, the job and raising three children, Joanie and I were burned out. The dream of this wonderful life as a family serving God had turned into a depressing nightmare with no solution.

In the midst of this, God spoke and said that I needed to love Joanie regardless of how she responded. With that word came that realization that if I did that, things would change. I started treating Joanie like the gift she was.

It was not always easy. So much resentment had built up on both sides that she did not always respond. However, with the word from God came the assurance that this would work. It took several months but God restored the marriage. Today the marriage is the best part of my life. God has so fully restored the marriage that people who did not know us then can scarcely believe that the marriage was ever less than wonderful.

As all this was happening, there was a major upheaval at church. The pastor, who had been a personal friend for several years, confessed to committing adultery. The next day he was forced to step down and leave the church. Not long after this, our six-year-old son Josh came down with appendicitis. Driving to the hospital, I was in a fog, understandably upset. While driving, I prayed, "Lord, please heal my son." As soon as the words were uttered, the fog seemed to lift and I had a thought. It was about Smith Wigglesworth, a great man of faith during the early twentieth century. While he was still a plumber, his appendix burst. The doctor examined him and said nothing could be done. A man heard about this, went to his house, punched him and commanded him to be healed in the Name of Jesus. Within thirty minutes, Wigglesworth was back to his plumbing business, totally healed.

That was a great story, but I was not sure I wanted to punch I son in the abdomen. I went through my "Charismatic checklist," frantically trying to determine if this was God speaking or just some random thought. I could not tell, but was aware that this was my only thought.

I arrived at the hospital with Josh in the emergency room surrounded by four doctors examining him. They were all convinced he had appendicitis. When the doctors left, I asked Josh what he wanted to do and he said he wanted to believe God. I looked at him and said, "Then I'm going to do what God told me to do." With that I closed the door to the hospital room, thinking that if this were not God they would hear Josh screaming in pain and lock me up for child abuse. I took my fist, drove it into Josh's side, and prayed. Within fifteen minutes he was completely healed.

I thought that if I ever experienced that kind of miracle, I would have arrived, like some great man of faith. When it actually happened, I was thrilled Josh was fine, but mostly it was a humbling experience. God showed up in this hour of weakness with His goodness and His goodness won.

While life on Long Island did not work out as planned, the family learned to make the best of it. Living with Joanie taught me that happiness had very little to do with circumstances. I came to realize that Joanie does many things extremely well. She knows that God is good and refuses to accept any thoughts to the contrary. Regardless of circumstances, she remains resolute that everything is going to be fine. As simple as that sounds, it runs contrary to much of my engineering training. I had been taught to focus on the problem, the "what if" scenarios, so that I was prepared for whatever cataclysmic event may come. While that is a great way to think when designing airplane systems, it is a depressing way to live. Learning to change how to think took years of practice, but it has borne much fruit. Biblical truth does not always agree with engineering logic. Which thought would prevail? Learning to replace the data from this world with the truth of

God's Word, resulted in increasing freedom. This is key to inner healing that requires an individual to recognize when they believe lies and replace them with the truth.

While Long Island was a nice place to live, it was spiritually dry. Much as we tried, we could not find a church that shared our hunger. Eventually, we agreed to try COS, provided we would not get involved in leadership. We had been involved in church leadership several times before with disappointing results. We were not going to do that again. We had been disappointed so many times before, that we refused to get their hopes up. The years on Long Island resulted in reduced expectations.

The church was nice, but quiet. In an attempt to meet some of the people at the church, we attended one of the church's home groups. The very first night, it was clear we belonged. Soon after we were leading a home group and teaching on Wednesday nights. Nicholas, (the Senior Pastor), asked me to head up a ministry project at the church. He then asked me to teach on Sunday mornings. Soon I was asked to serve on the elder council. Joanie and I have been at the church since 2001 and I have been on the elder council since 2003. The church has become family and it has changed the perspective on the importance of a local church.

Nicholas saw my gifts as a complement to his. Unlike some of the pastors encountered in the past, there was no competition with Nicholas. Nicholas provided an opportunity to develop as a child of God and to serve the local body.

While Joanie and I loved our church, there was still a hunger for more of God. A local revivalist started holding conferences on Long Island. We went, still desperate for more of God. While the meetings seemed a little strange, there was no denying the strong sense of the Presence of God. One of the speakers was Randy Clark. We had never heard

Randy before and were greatly blessed by his humility and the way the Spirit of God moved when he ministered. After the meeting, we decided to go to one of his week-long healing schools.

The healing school was life changing, although not in the way I would have expected. One of the speakers at the healing school taught on inner healing. I went up after the service to speak to him. When we were done, he asked if there were any issues with my father. I told him no, knowing there were no unresolved issues. He kept pressing, sure that there had to be father issues. I left that session angry, hating inner healing. It seemed that inner healing was people looking to dig up something that was not there.

After dinner, during the evening session while worshipping God I had a vision. In the vision was a Little League team. They were wearing navy blue shirts and had pinstripe pants. They were in a circle jumping up and down. While I could not see myself, I knew I was in the middle. I also knew that God was the coach. I was wondering why they were jumping up and down. I initially thought they were jumping up and down because I had gotten the game-winning hit. Then I realized that the reason they were jumping up and down was that they were glad I was on the team. As soon as I realized that, I started crying and could not stop. The whole vision lasted a minute or two (the crying lasted awhile), but in that short amount of time, God delivered me from years of feeling that I did not fit, did not belong. I had spent years struggling with that very thing. I prayed, asked for prayer, read books, confided in people, did everything I knew to do short of professional help and all I ever got was temporary relief that felt like a Band-Aid on a bullet wound. God showed up and fixed it in a matter of minutes.

That experience taught me that the Holy Spirit could do in a matter of minutes what years of counseling might fail to accomplish. The realization came that He was the one who delighted in setting people free. Not surprisingly, I no longer hated inner healing. I now saw it in a different light. The understanding came that the key to inner healing was to help someone connect to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would do the rest, touching those wounded areas, replacing lies with truth and bringing healing in the process. Inner healing was no longer about digging around in the past to find something wrong. It was giving the Holy Spirit access to bring healing to those places of pain that we desperately try to conceal. The experience completely transformed my view of inner healing and the need to have God touch and heal the wounded areas of someone's life.

Despite all that had happened, the hunger for God remained. Like many times in the past, there was a sense that there was more available, beyond what we were experiencing. We found out about a healing conference, "The Hem of His Garment," at Bethel Church in Redding, CA, and went.

Bethel's focus on the Presence of God hovering over a church did not make sense. After all, in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, not a building. After the Sunday morning service, we walked across the parking lot to their Alabaster Prayer House, just to check things out and sat down on a bench outside the prayer house. All of a sudden the Presence of God just descended on me. I looked at Joanie, now overwhelmed by His Presence and said, "I guess I was wrong." I had just experienced the Presence of God in such a strong way that all of my questions were no longer relevant. The conference was amazing. We spent a week with three hundred other people just

basking in His Presence. We were amazed by how much easier, freer, this type of Christianity was than what he had always known.

We went home and continued to enjoy the Presence of God. I told the church that I was seeing more stuff happen by accident than I ever did before on purpose. The experience changed my life. While I knew that God was good and had seen and experienced His miraculous power in the past, I thought that it depended almost entirely on personal faith and obedience. At the conference, Joaquin Evans made two statements that have permanently changed this perspective on the Christian life: "God is so good at His job that He doesn't need as much help as we think He does. God is so good at His job that we don't need to be that good at ours."

Those statements combined with the Presence of God that was manifest in the building blew a big hole in my theology. Prior to this the focus was on personal responsibility. This placed all of the emphasis on the individual believer. The result was that I was always measuring my performance. What I failed to realize was that this created another form of law and it was a suffocating experience. The conference focused on God, on His goodness, His faithfulness, His love. When the focus changed, everything else changed. I still did all of the right things, but the burden was no longer on me. Once the focus shifted to God, what once was a struggle came naturally.

With this came an increasing reliance on the Holy Spirit. It was obvious that the Holy Spirit was always there, but I had not realized just how much He desires to lead us, to guide us. The Holy Spirit became a personal coach. Gone were the lists of all the things that needed to be done to please God. The list was whittled down to two items: love God, and follow the Holy Spirit. Everything else flowed from that.

While all of this was exciting, I continued to meet many people who loved God but were not experiencing the freedom they desired. The journey towards inner healing ministry grew out of the desire to see these people made whole. What was needed was a way of connecting broken people to the Presence of God in a very personal way. *Sozo* provided that opportunity.

Background on Inner Healing and *Sozo*

Inner healing is a ministry that seeks to deal with inner emotional pain.² It addresses hurts, wound, lies, insecurities, fears, and bondages. These can come from past events, traumas, demonic activity, etc. Inner healing is designed to identify and heal root issues. Much of inner healing revolves around correcting a false self-image. Neil Anderson, one of the foremost Christian practitioners in the area of inner healing has stated, “Your hope for growth, meaning and fulfillment as a Christian is based on understanding who you are - specifically your identity in Christ as a child of God.”³ “True freedom comes when we no longer need to be somebody special in other people’s eyes because we know we are loveable and good enough.”⁴

The inner healing model to be studied for this project is the *Sozo* model, developed at Bethel Church in Redding, CA. *Sozo* is a Greek word, which means saved, healed, delivered and made whole. The *Sozo* ministry is, “aimed to get to the root of

² Agnes Sanford, “The Healing Light,” accessed May 11, 2013, <http://heyjoi.tripod.com/id17.html>.

³ Neil Anderson, *Victory Over the Darkness: Realizing the Power of Your Identity in Christ*, 10th Anniversary Addition Edition ed. (Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 2011), p 9.

⁴ Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash a Revolution in Your Life in Christ* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), p 77.

things hindering your personal connection with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”⁵ The *Sozo* model includes tools from various ministries including Dr. Ed Smith, Pablo Botari and Aiko Horman. During a *Sozo* session, the person receiving ministry (called the client) is led to hear from God concerning lies, hurts, and bondages in their life. Once the lies are exposed the client is led through prayer, releasing those bondages. The client is then guided to hear from the Father concerning their true identity. The client leaves the session having the previous lies replaced by the truth of how God sees them. As lies are replaced by truth, freedom results.

During a *Sozo* session, the *Sozo* team will lead the client through the healing process. A variety of tools are available for the *Sozo* team to use. The basic tools of *Sozo* are the Father Ladder, the Four Doors, the Wall and Presenting Jesus.

The Father Ladder is a tool that examines the connection between how someone views their earthly family and friends, and how they view the Godhead. The rationale for this tool is that there is a strong correlation between our earthly relationships and our relationship with God. Individuals who have a difficult time experiencing intimacy with Father God typically have root issues stemming from hurts, wounds in their relationship with their earthly father. These wounds often affect one’s identity, self-esteem, sense of protection and provision. By uncovering the hurts and lies that developed in one’s relationship with their earthly father, healing results and intimacy with the Father God is realized.

In similar fashion, the Father ladder examines one’s relationship with their Mother, (which correlates to their relationship with the Holy Spirit) and their

⁵ “What is Sozo?” Bethel Sozo, accessed May 12, 2013, <http://www.bethelsozo.com>.

relationships with friends and siblings (correlating to their relationship with Jesus). Forgiveness is a large component of the Father Ladder. Unforgiveness brings bondage, bitterness, hurt. It destroys intimacy both with God and with other people. As the client is led to forgive those who may have hurt them, bitterness is removed and intimacy with God and man results.

The Four Doors is a tool originally developed by Pablo Botari. The Four Doors operates on the premise that all strongholds or issues gain access through these four doors.⁶ These doors are fear, hatred, sexual sin and the occult. As the client is led through each of the doors, the Holy Spirit reveals any root issues within these arenas. Once the client is guided through a process where the lies are renounced, the truth is discovered and embraced, and healing results.

Presenting Jesus is a tool used to address wounds from memories. The client is taken back to the memory where he Jesus where He was in the memory. Through this process, the client is healed. The fourth tool, the Wall is specifically designed to uncover and remove walls that individuals have erected in their lives to protect themselves from additional pain.

Sozo is not a counseling session. The *Sozo* team simply guides the client through the session using the tools so that the client can hear from God for himself or herself. Usually the client leaves the session with an increased sensitivity to hear from God. A greater level of intimacy with God is typically a result of *Sozo*. This intimacy helps the client to steward their breakthrough.

⁶ Dawna DeSilva, and Teresa Liebscher, *Bethel Sozo Ministry, Bethel Transformation Training Manual Basic Sozo*, (Redding, CA, 2011), 38.

A typical *Sozo* session consists of a client and a *Sozo* team consisting of two or three members, identified as first chair, second chair and third chair. The first chair conducts the session. All communication between the team and the client is through the first chair. This eliminates confusion. The second chair has the responsibility of recording any affirmations from the Godhead to the client. These can vary from simply words such as “I love you,” to visions that God reveals, or other deeply personal encounters. The client is given this record at the end of the *Sozo* and is encouraged to continue to meditate on these affirmations from the heart of God. If the second chair senses that the Holy Spirit is leading in a particular direction, he or she will write it down and hand this information to the first chair. The third chair, if present, will quietly intercede and observe.

While *Sozo* has a standard set of tools, it does not follow a standard pattern or prescribed route. Most sessions at COS typically start with the Father Ladder. Depending on the leading of the Holy Spirit and the response by the client, the session may continue to progress through the Father Ladder, addressing intimacy with all three members of the Trinity. In some cases, the first chair may shift to the Wall or the Four Doors or another tool. At times the session may go back to a tool used at the beginning of the session. The sequence of events is not important. As the client hears from the Trinity, wounds and lies are exposed. When these are replaced by the truth, freedom results. One *Sozo* team member describes the session as, “It’s always fluid, it doesn’t have a particular pattern and I allow the person to tell me where I need to go.”

As of February 2015, *Sozo* had a network of ministries in local churches operating in thirty-eight states within the United States and sixteen foreign countries.⁷ Regional *Sozo* directors conduct *Sozo* training sessions on a regular basis. Individuals desiring to be involved in *Sozo* ministry must not only take the training, they must also have a personal *Sozo* and participate in *Sozo* sessions prior to being allowed to conduct *Sozos* themselves.

Project Context – Church on the Sound

The context for this research project is COS, a local non-denominational church located in Stony Brook, Long Island. COS was started in 1985 with seven families. The goal of COS was to establish a congregation where the lost and hurting could receive ministry. In the words of founding pastor (and current Senior Pastor), Nicholas Seeberger, the church was “forged from a crucible of pain.”

The church’s name was derived from Church on the Way, in Van Nuys, CA, pastored by Jack Hayford. Like Church on the Way, Pastor Nicholas and his wife Joy desired a church that allowed individuals to develop and exercise their God given gifts and abilities. This desire to have “every believer a minister” remains a core value of COS today. While the church is located only a few miles from Long Island Sound, the word “Sound” in COS was not chosen because of location. The word “Sound” signifies sound doctrine, sound worship, and sound hearts. The church continues to be non-denominational and is not formally affiliated with any other church organization.

⁷ “Sozo Network,” Bethel Sozo, accessed February 12, 2015, <http://www.bethelsozo.com/sozo-network>.

Suffolk County and Long Island Demographics

Stony Brook, home to COS, is located on the north shore of Long Island, the most populous island in the United States.⁸ Long Island comprises four counties: Kings (commonly known as Brooklyn), Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk. While Brooklyn and Queens are physically on Long Island, they are politically two of the five boroughs of New York City. Long Island connects to New York City through a system of bridges and tunnels (which are always crowded).

The remaining two counties, Nassau and Suffolk, comprise what is typically considered to be Long Island. Nassau, the more western of the two counties, has a population of 1,339,532 residents. Suffolk County, with a much larger land mass, has a population of 1,493,350, making it the fourth most-populated county in New York State.⁹ It is an affluent area, ranked as the sixteenth wealthiest county in the United States.¹⁰ The median income in Suffolk County is \$84,506, while the median age is 39.8 years.¹¹ Suffolk County is home to a wide variety of ethnic groups, with Caucasians making up 71.6% of the population.¹² Suffolk County is considered suburban, with the easternmost sections being home to resorts, vineyards and farmland. Like most of lower New York

⁸ “Long Island,” *TripCart*, accessed April 19, 2013, <http://www.tripcart.com/usa-regions/Long-Island,Society-Culture.aspx#Guide>.

⁹ “Population of Long Island, 2010 Census,” *Newsday*, accessed April 19, 2013, <http://longisland.newsday.com/templates/simpleDB/?pid=190>.

¹⁰ “2009 ACS Census Data 100 Wealthiest Counties in America 200k Plus,” *City-Data.com*, accessed April 19, 2013, <http://www.city-data.com/forum/maryland/1189037-2009-ac-s-census-data-100-wealthiest.html>.

¹¹ “Suffolk County Demographics – Census Data for Suffolk County, NY,” *New York Demographics*, accessed April 19, 2013, <http://www.newyork-demographics.com/suffolk-county-demographics>.

¹² “Suffolk County Demographics – Census Data for Suffolk County, NY,”

State, Suffolk County has a fast-paced lifestyle. Population has remained fairly constant over the past few years.

Catholics are the predominant religious group in Suffolk County, with almost half of all residents (734,174) claiming affiliation to the Roman Catholic Church.¹³ Of these 734,174 people, over 60% consider themselves to be “adherents,” meaning they regularly attend services.¹⁴ Jewish people are the next most populous religious group with an estimated 100,000 people.¹⁵ New York has the second highest population of Jewish people in the world with 1.9 million people.¹⁶ Over four hundred thousand (454,648) people claim no religious affiliation.¹⁷ Stony Brook is an affluent suburban community with a median income 41% higher than the median income for Suffolk County.¹⁸ The average age in Stony Brook is forty-three years old. Eight-five percent of its residents are Caucasian.¹⁹

¹³ “County Membership Report: Suffolk County New York,” Association of Religious Data Archives, accessed April 19, 2013, http://www.thearda.com/mapsReports/reports/counties/36103_2000_Rate.asp.

¹⁴ “County Membership Report: Suffolk County New York.”

¹⁵ “County Membership Report: Suffolk County New York.”

¹⁶ “World Jewish Population,” Simple To Remember -- Online Judaism, accessed April 19, 2013, <http://www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/world-jewish-population.htm>.

¹⁷ “World Jewish Population.”

¹⁸ “2009 ACS Census Data 100 Wealthiest Counties in America 200k Plus,” City-Data.com, accessed April 19, 2013, <http://www.city-data.com/forum/maryland/1189037-2009-ac-sensus-data-100-wealthiest.html>.

¹⁹ “2009 ACS Census Data 100 Wealthiest Counties in America 200k Plus.”

Church on the Sound History

The roots of COS can be traced back to the Catholic Charismatic movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. During this time, thousands of Catholics came to experience God in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. While some stayed within the Catholic Church, many desired a less traditional church environment. This resulted in many new Protestant churches being formed, mostly comprised of Spirit-filled Catholics.

While COS fits this demographic, its Pastor, Nicholas Seeberger has a different background. Nicholas comes from a Pentecostal family in upstate New York and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Oral Roberts University. Prior to starting COS, he was employed as a music minister. His background and training helps to shape the culture of the church. From its beginnings, Pastor Nicholas and his wife Joy desired to instill a strong sense of community within the congregation. The church's conservative theology and emphasis on worship was formed from his upbringing and training.

The church continued to experience steady growth through its first several years, despite an inability to find a permanent home due to an expensive real estate market and restrictive zoning laws on Long Island. In 1990 the church embarked on an ambitious renovation of a warehouse in the Stony Brook Technology Park. It appeared that the church might finally have a permanent home. Now that the church had seemingly found a home, it grew to a congregation of three hundred. However, after renting the facility for five years, it was apparent that the church would not be able to purchase the facility.

At the same time, a significant change in the leadership of the church was taking place. The current Board of Trustees, while committed to the ministry, was primarily focused on financial and business matters. Nicholas desired a leadership team more

focused on the spiritual life of the local body. This shift, along with the failure to secure a permanent location, caused many families to leave the church.

Despite the setback, Nicholas, Joy, and the remaining members of COS remained committed to what God had called them to accomplish. The church was subsequently granted permission to meet at a local junior high school. This started what became known as the “ministry of schlepp” (Yiddish for hauling), as everything had to be set up and broken down at each service. The church was still in need of a permanent home.

In 1996 the church received a prophetic word that God would provide \$75,000 within the next two weeks. God was faithful to fulfill the prophetic word as the money was donated to the church. These funds were used towards the purchase of the property that the church now occupies. In May 2001, the church moved into its first permanent home. This 7,700 square foot facility is the current home for the congregation. It includes a sanctuary that seats two hundred thirty people, a family room, offices and classrooms.

Since May 2001, the church has continued to grow. A second Sunday service was added to accommodate the church’s growth to three hundred people. The congregation currently consists of two hundred twenty adults, forty youth (ages thirteen through eighteen), and forty children (nursery age through age twelve). The sanctuary and classrooms are now operating at close to full capacity. Plans to expand the facility are presently underway.

Life at Church on the Sound

Newcomers to COS typically comment on the friendly and inviting atmosphere of the church. This atmosphere stems from Nicholas' desire that COS be a place where all can come and experience the love of God, both through worship and the love of the people. The church boasts a variety of ministries, for both the local body and the surrounding community. The purpose behind all of the ministries at COS is to honor God, and cause people to experience His love. The church strives to find a place of ministry for all who are interested. This is in keeping with the church's core value of "every believer a minister."

The church has services for children and youth in addition to the Sunday adult services. The children's ministry includes regular Sunday school, as well as an annual Vacation Bible School that ministers to the children both in the church and the local community. The youth ministry, which meets weekly, has annual retreats and missions trips where the lives of the youth are significantly impacted. The women's ministry has both evening and daytime Bible studies as well as luncheons designed to minister both to the women in the church and those outside the church. Celebrate Recovery, a ministry to help people overcome addictive behavior, meets weekly. Several people have been saved and have joined the church as a result of this ministry. Life groups, which are home-based small groups, meet on a regular basis as part of the church's goal to build community. COS also hosts an annual picnic as an outreach to the local community. Classes on marriage, family, and financial management are offered on a periodic basis. The men's ministry meets regularly for fellowship and to encourage men to live godly

lives. Kairos is the church's young adult ministry aimed at meeting the needs of young adults college age through age twenty-five.

Missions are an important aspect of the church. The church supports several missionaries both through donations from parishioners, as well as from the general funds of the church. The church's policy is to support missionaries that are in relationship with COS. Missionary contributions are split between local, national and international missionary organizations. The church also participates in short-term mission trips, primarily to Guatemala. In addition to evangelistic activities, the church has developed tilapia farms to help the Guatemalan church earn additional income. As part of the missions focus, the church has a ministry devoted to helping those in need called Sam's Purse. The goal of Sam's Purse is to provide short-term financial help to those in the church and the community. Sam's Purse also provides meals to those in need during the holiday seasons.

Long Island has a large Jewish population and the church reaches out to the Jewish community where possible. Church members are encouraged to join in marches and gatherings against anti-Semitism that occur periodically in the New York metropolitan area. Nicholas has often said, "Our roots run deep into Hebrew soil," emphasizing the Jewish origins of Christianity.

Church Theology

The theology of COS is Charismatic-Evangelical. While the gifts of the Spirit are evident within the church, it is done in such a way as to not make the non-Charismatic

members feel unwelcome or second-class. Maintaining a charismatic focus while accommodating non-Charismatics has been a major goal of Pastor Nicholas.

Over the past several years an increasing hunger for a greater move of the Spirit of God has been evident in much of the congregation. Approximately five years ago over sixty people were trained in praying for the sick and were activated in words of knowledge. This led to the development of ministry teams that are available to minister to a variety of needs every Sunday morning. People are healed almost every week in response to this ministry.

The church maintains its strong emphasis on worship. Several worship teams minister on a rotating schedule on Sunday, each with its own style of worship. Worship at COS ranges from hymns to contemporary worship.

Church Leadership

The responsibility for the overall leadership and direction of the church rests with the church's Council of Elders. The Council is comprised of eight men who have a variety of backgrounds and theological perspectives ranging from Calvinist, to Baptist, to Messianic to highly Charismatic. This is to support Nicholas' desire to have the church as inclusive as possible while still maintaining its Charismatic-Evangelical theology. The diversity of leadership provides a more ecumenical perspective than most other Long Island churches.

As the Council of Elders has changed over the years, so has the overall focus of the church. Fifteen years ago, the focus was on protecting the congregants, ensuring they had a safe place to worship. Manifestations of the Spirit, while permitted, were not

encouraged. Today, the move of the Spirit of God is encouraged. The Council of Elders meets periodically to pray and petition God for a greater manifestation of His presence, His power and His gifts within the local body. A hunger to see God come and restore that which is wounded or broken in people's lives continues to grow. Each Monday night, the elders lead the body of COS in intercessory prayer.

In 2011, the leadership team, along with key members of the congregation, embarked on a strategic planning project to help focus the direction of the church. From this process, the church identified five core values:

1. The Presence of God
2. A culture of honor
3. Commitment to biblical truth
4. Every believer a minister
5. Sound people (wholeness)

These five core values have served to provide a focus for the future direction of the church. While the Strategic Planning process is still in process, the outcome to date has been a greater emphasis on the Presence of God and the move of the Holy Spirit.

Despite the church's varied ministries, there was no ministry specifically designed to help people with inner healing needs. Pastor Nicholas remarked that he was looking for years for the right ministry. The church leadership had looked at several candidates but had yet to find any that fit the needs and culture of the church. The church also lacked someone with the passion and skill set to lead this ministry. The increased emphasis on the Presence of God and development of the core values had brought COS to the place where it was time to establish an inner healing ministry. After much research, the church leadership agreed that the *Sozo* inner healing model, led by Joanie Wattoff should be added to the various ministries at COS. In October 2012, a team from House Of Praise

For All People Church in Greenwood, DE, led by Lauralynn Westwood, regional *Sozo* director, came to COS to provide training and oversight in *Sozo* ministry. Shortly after that the church began its *Sozo* ministry. The ministry continues to grow and has become an integral part of fulfilling the church's core value of Sound People.

The *Sozo* ministry has also helped COS become an even greater resource to the community and other churches on Long Island. Despite having a population of almost three million people, COS is the first Long Island church with a recognized *Sozo* ministry. Individuals from several other churches participated in the initial training and are continuing to take part in ongoing training. Several of these people are part of the twice-monthly *Sozo* sessions conducted at COS. *Sozo* is meeting a need previously unmet on Long Island.

Project Focus

As of May 2013, no studies had been done evaluating the effectiveness of *Sozo* ministry. In response to that information, it was concluded that a study evaluating *Sozo*'s effectiveness would be of value using COS as the context. The methodology for this study was to collect data through the use of surveys, and interviews from clients. In addition, data would be collected from *Sozo* team members using field notes and focus group sessions. The data would be analyzed to determine *Sozo*'s effectiveness in freeing individuals from wounds and lies that have had them captive and in increasing their intimacy with the Trinity.

Conclusion

As of February 2015, COS is once again positioning itself for future growth. The church is in the process of purchasing twelve acres of land. This will provide room for a new church and future expansion. Administratively, the church has added a full time assistant pastor who is tasked with helping the church grow. Part of this is the implementation of a new database management system designed to help improve communication within the body. Weekly training sessions are being conducted to train people in various ministries. *Sozo* is a vital part of this as it continues to provide inner healing to those in the church and the surrounding community.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

Biblical Introduction

Jesus came to set captives free. That freedom includes freedom from sin, sickness, emotional bondages and oppression. Isaiah 53:5 announces Jesus' atoning work, which includes Him taking the chastening for our peace and our well-being upon Himself. The Hebrew word translated as “peace” is the word *shalom*, which means completeness, soundness, and well-being.¹ The ministry of Jesus, as outlined in Luke 4:18 is a testimony of God’s desire to restore, to make whole. Luke writes that Jesus “went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil” (Acts 10:38). That restoration includes what is commonly called inner healing.

Inner healing is a ministry directed at freeing individuals from emotional bondages. Inner healing is when “God’s Spirit is allowed to touch the root cause of disturbances, hurts, and agonies and to restore health in the deepest core of the person’s being.”² It addresses hurts, wounds, lies, insecurities, fears, and bondages. These can come from past events, traumas, demonic activity, etc. Much of inner healing revolves around correcting a false self-image. Neil Anderson, one of the foremost Christian

¹ I. Howard Marshall et al., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 891.

² David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill, eds. *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 1999), 622.

practitioners in the area of inner healing, has stated that for healing to take place “it is important to recognize faulty beliefs from the past, to renounce them as lies, and to reprogram and renew our minds with truth.”³ Much of this renewing of the mind involves developing a proper sense of identity, which is foundational to someone’s emotional and spiritual well-being. As Anderson states, “Your hope for growth, meaning and fulfillment as a Christian is based on understanding who you are— specifically your identity in Christ as a child of God.”⁴ A proper identity is vital to emotional health.

One way that God changes identity and brings healing to lives is through encounters with Him. Encounters with God are a common, recurring theme in biblical literature. God speaks to Noah and has him build an ark, by which he saved his family and condemned the world. He speaks to Abraham and tells him to sacrifice his son of promise. Moses sees a burning bush that is not consumed. When he turns aside to look, God speaks to him and the history of the world is forever changed. The three Hebrew children surviving a fiery furnace dramatically impacts not only their lives, but also the life of Nebuchadnezzar. In the Gospels, Peter lets down his nets in response to Jesus’ command and is forever changed by the event. It is clear that God knows how to get one’s attention.

God does not get someone’s attention just to show off, nor simply to prove that He is there. Encounters with God are often life changing, affecting individuals at a very deep and heart-felt place in their lives. This paper will examine four very specific encounters with God related to inner healing: Jacob wrestling with the Angel in Genesis,

³ Neil T. Anderson, *Who I Am in Christ* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2001), 7.

⁴ Neil T. Anderson, *Victory Over the Darkness: Realizing the Power of Your Identity in Christ*, 10th Anniversary Edition (Ventura, CA: Regal 2011), 9.

Gideon's defeat of the Midianites in Judges, Saul's dramatic conversion experience in Acts, and the encounter between the Samaritan woman at the well and Jesus in the gospel of John. The study will seek to address the following questions:

- What was the individual's identity prior to the encounter?
- What circumstances led up to this event?
- What transpired during this encounter?
- How was the individual affected?
- How was the individual's identity changed and how did that transform the individual?

Jacob Wrestling with the Angel

Jacob's wrestling match with the angel takes place at night, after he crosses the Jabbok, a stream on the east of the Jordan River that divides Gilead. Michael Marsh comments that the Jabbok "is the place where we are wounded, renamed, blessed, and made a new person. It is a holy place."⁵ Up to this time, Jacob's life has been that of a schemer (his name, Jacob, means deceiver or supplanter). Jacob's most notable deception was tricking his father, Isaac, into giving him the blessing of the first-born. It is this deception that causes Esau, his older twin and the biological first-born, to vow that he will kill his brother Jacob. In response, Jacob and Esau's mother, Rebekah, has Jacob flee to her brother Laban. It is now many years later and Jacob is preparing to meet his estranged brother Esau, not knowing what will befall him.

Jacob's wrestling match with the angel is not his first divine encounter. In Genesis 28, while he is fleeing to the house of Laban, Jacob has a dream where he sees angels ascending and descending a ladder stretched between heaven and earth. In the

⁵Michael Marsh, "Crossing the Jabbok – A Sermon on Genesis 32:22-31 (Jacob Wrestling), Proper 13A," *Interrupting the Silence*, accessed October 5th, 2013, <http://interruptingthesilence.com/2011/07/31/crossing-the-jabbok-a-sermon-on-genesis-3222-31-jacob-wrestling-proper-11a/>.

dream, God speaks to him and promises to bless him, bless his descendants, and protect him. Jacob names the location Bethel (Hebrew for house of God) and vows to give God a tenth of all God gives him. It is interesting to note that this encounter does not provoke a significant transformation in Jacob's behavior. He continues to live primarily by his own cunning, rather than by faith in God.

In preparation for their meeting, Jacob sends messengers to his brother Esau. The messengers return telling Jacob that Esau has four hundred men with him, news that strikes fear in Jacob's heart. Jacob then divides his camp into two companies so that if one company is attacked, the other can escape. Walton observes that, "In these difficult straits we finally find Jacob resorting to prayer."⁶ Jacob prays for God's protection, recounting the promises God has made to him. This is a significant change in Jacob's behavior and the first indication that a change in Jacob's nature is about to take place. Redford points out, "Jacob had good reason to go to God in prayer. He knew that the sizable group approaching him, led by Esau, could easily overpower him."⁷ Jacob realizes that all of his cunning is no match for his brother's four hundred men.

Jacob then takes his family and crosses the Jabbok. Rosenblatt comments, "Throughout time, crossing rivers has symbolized the overcoming of an important personal threshold of experience."⁸ He sends his family across the stream and is left to spend the night alone. The text offers no insight as to why Jacob decided to spend the

⁶ John Walton, *Genesis: From Biblical Text . . . to Contemporary Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 604.

⁷ Douglas Redford (compiled), *Old Testament: The Pentateuch (standard Reference Library)* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2008), 133.

⁸ Naomi H. Rosenblatt and Joshua Horwitz, *Wrestling with Angels: What Genesis Teaches Us About Our Spiritual Identity, Sexuality and Personal Relationships* (New York, NY: Delta, 1996), 298.

night alone. Perhaps he separated himself from his family for their protection. Perhaps it was divine providence. Rosenblatt observes, “When we are alone in the stillness of the night, we face our worst fears and our deepest wishes. It is often at these dark moments that we discover who we really are.”⁹ This is the situation in which Jacob finds himself. For all he knows, he could be facing death at the hand of his brother. “At this point, his world (the pre-liminal) has collapsed. His sense of identity has dissolved.”¹⁰ No indication can be observed that he is about to have a supernatural experience that will change the course of his life.

Jacob is now alone, at night. The biblical text recounts that Jacob wrestled at night with a man until daybreak (Gen 32:24-32). When the man does not prevail, he touches the socket of Jacob’s thigh, causing it to be dislocated. This is the first indication that this man is not human, but someone/something supernatural. The man then asks Jacob to let him go for reasons not explained in the text; he must be gone before dawn. Many scholars believe this was to keep his identity hidden. Jacob refuses to let the man go until he blesses him. The man asks Jacob for his name. Upon hearing the name, the man tells him that his name will no longer be Jacob but Israel, (meaning one who has striven with God) as he has striven with God and prevailed. Despite Jacob’s inquiries, the man declines to tell him his name. Jacob comments that he has seen God face-to-face and yet his life has been preserved. He then names the location of the altercation Peniel, meaning the face of God. Jacob then leaves Peniel limping on his dislocated thigh.

⁹ Rosenblatt and Horowitz, 296.

¹⁰ Michael Abramsky, "Jacob Wrestles the Angel: a Study in Psychoanalytic Midrash." *International Journal Of Transpersonal Studies* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 109.

This story raises several questions. Was this in fact an actual encounter or was it simply a dream? Who was “the man” that Jacob wrestled? Why did the man not prevail? Why was Jacob injured? What was the nature of the blessing bestowed on Jacob? How was Jacob changed by the encounter?

Whether this was an actual physical encounter is a topic that scholars continue to debate. Ross observes, “Several interpreters have suggested that this is a dream narrative.”¹¹ However, as Brueggemann notes, “the author describes more than a dark night of the soul, as does the lack of reference to dreaming or sleeping. This is no nightmare; Jacob remains fully awake.”¹² This is more probable, since no reference to dreaming is made. It may have appeared to be a dream to Jacob at first, but by the time he is done, he knows he had a very real, very physical wrestling match with someone. His subsequent injury from the encounter serves as a permanent reminder that this was a very real event, not a dream, and not something imagined.

Who was the man with whom Jacob wrestled? Was it in fact a man? The man “appears out of nowhere and mysteriously disappears.”¹³ Many rabbis believed “this man was the Guardian angel of Esau [in the guise of a man] (*Rashi*).”¹⁴ Brueggemann notes,

¹¹ Allen Ross, "Studies in the Life of Jacob, pt 2: Jacob at the Jabbok, Israel at Peniel." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142, no. 568 (October 1, 1985): 339.

¹² Walter Brueggemann et al., *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, & Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 568.

¹³ Steven Molen, "The Identity of Jacob's Opponent: Wrestling with Ambiguity in Gen. 32:22-32." *Shofar* 11, (Winter 1993): 187.

¹⁴ Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz, *Bereishis / Genesis - 2 Volume Set: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources* (Brooklyn, NY: ArtScroll, Mesorah Publications, 1986), 1b:1437.

“Jacob may well have thought it was Esau.”¹⁵ Blumenthal views this from a psychological frame of reference, proposing:

The two adversaries in this fight are the symbolic representatives of two inner voices in Jacob: One that advocates the entry into the land which had been promised to his forefathers and to which he felt entitled; the other which advocates a prosperous life on the other side of the border, thereby avoiding the dreaded warfare with his brother.¹⁶

Hosea 12:3-4 comments that “he contended with God”, and that “he wrestled with an angel.” As previously stated, the fact that Jacob was injured shows that he was wrestling with a real being. Despite Jacob’s statement that he has “seen God face to face,” the evidence points to the fact that this was an angel, a divine messenger, sent to Jacob. Why was he sent to wrestle with Jacob? Why did the angel not simply come and pronounce a blessing? Rabbi Zlotowitz states, “the angel’s purpose was to prevent Jacob from fleeing so that Jacob would see God keep his promise that Esau would not harm him.”¹⁷ While this is speculation, the fact that the angel dislocated Jacob’s thigh with a touch proved that he could have prevailed at any time. So why did they contend all night?

The answer lies in Jacob’s new name, Israel. Israel means one who has striven with God. Israel becomes not only Jacob’s new name but also the name of an entire nation, as God promised to Abraham. In wrestling with the angel, Jacob was redefining who he was. He would no longer be known as a deceiver but as one who had striven with God and prevailed. In re-naming Jacob, the angel sets the character of the entire nation that is to bear his name. In wrestling with the angel, Jacob “wins the blessing he once

¹⁵ Brueggemann, 566.

¹⁶ Fred Blumenthal, "Who Wrestled with Jacob?" *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 38, (2010): 120.

¹⁷ Zlotowitz, 1437.

sought in his father's tent.”¹⁸ The angel does not bless Jacob until Jacob first reveals his identity, which discloses his character, his past.¹⁹ In re-naming him, the angel is redefining his identity. Horsley accurately points out, “Where a religious motive is involved it is not to be doubted that the change is of great personal significance to the individual.”²⁰

At some point in the struggle, Jacob begins to understand the importance of this night. He realized he was not just in a wrestling match with a human being. Why else would he refuse to let go until the man blessed him? In asking the man’s name, Jacob reveals that he did not know the man’s complete identity. However, in renaming the place Peniel, the face of God, it was clear he understood that this encounter was of divine origin. Redford’s assessment is the most likely: “One may conclude that Jacob *wrestled* with a messenger from God in the person of a man, and he realized that he had been thus confronted by God himself.”²¹ Rosenblatt and Horwitz further conclude, “Reborn as an adult with a family of his own, Jacob can now embrace his covenant with God.”²²

Why was Jacob injured? Multiple reasons for this can be noted. The first is the fact that Jacob being injured leaves no doubt that this was a real, physical encounter. The second is that Jacob’s limp “is not merely a physical defect but the symbol of a new

¹⁸ Rosenblatt and Horwitz, 299.

¹⁹ Gordon Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary (Vol. 2) Genesis 16-50* (Grand Rapids, MI: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 296.

²⁰ G. Horsley, “Name Change as an Indication of Religious Conversion in Antiquity.” *Numen* 34, no. 1 (June 1987): 13.

²¹ Redford, 134.

²² Rosenblatt and Horwitz, 300.

spiritual and moral identity.”²³ Jacob is forever marked by the encounter; the limp is a physical reminder that God has done work that is permanent and lasting in his life.

Why would God orchestrate such an event? Nothing in Jacob’s past qualified him for this encounter. As Klein states, “God appeared to one who was totally undeserving.”²⁴ This is a reminder that God often responds based on who He is and what His purposes are, not based on what we believe we have earned. Randy Clark observes, “God does not treat us according to our history, but according to our destiny.”²⁵ In blessing Jacob, God was being faithful to the promises he made to his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. He was working to fulfill the blessing that Isaac had pronounced over Jacob. The struggle was God’s idea, Brueggemann notes, as “Jacob cannot struggle with God if God refuses to be so engaged. God’s giving this name, then, has implications for God as well as for Jacob. It affirms a divine commitment to stay with Jacob in the struggle.”²⁶

How was Jacob changed? When God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, he was never again referred to as Abram. The same cannot be said of Jacob. He continues to be referred to at times as Jacob, and other times as Israel. Aspects of his personality remain with him for life. Janzen observes, “If we were to follow Jacob through the rest of Genesis, we would see a man clearly changed, yet still anxious.”²⁷ Abramsky believes

²³ Ehud Luz, *Wrestling with an Angel: Power, Morality, and Jewish Identity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 281.

²⁴ Ralph Klein, “Celebrating and Sharing the Gift: Reflections on Jacob, Israel’s Ancestor,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 18, no. 4 (August 1991): 266.

²⁵ Randy Clark, *There Is More! The Secret to Experiencing God’s Power to Change Your Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Chosen Books, 2013), 110.

²⁶ Brueggemann, 568.

²⁷ J. Gerald Janzen, “How Can a Man Be Born When He is Old?: Jacob/Israel in Genesis and the Gospel of John,” *Encounter* 65, no. 4 (September 2004): 330.

that Jacob moved “from a character dominated by self-defeating neurosis through his transformation into a spiritual being and exemplar of principled leadership.”²⁸ Through this encounter, Jacob (now Israel) has learned that his new name would serve as a reminder “to believe that God would go before him and fight for him.”²⁹

The most immediate change in Jacob is in his dealing with Esau. This is no longer a meeting of two estranged brothers looking to even the score. Rather, it becomes two brothers looking to honor and bless each other. Jacob then journeys to Shechem and erects an altar called El-Elohe-Israel, which means God the God of Israel. The God of Abraham and Isaac is now also Jacob’s God, the God of Israel. Jacob’s life has been forever changed as a result of the encounter at Peniel. Gone is the schemer, the man who stole his brother’s birthright. His meeting with Esau is marked by humility, a graciousness that he did not previously possess. The encounter has transformed him so that he is now ready to fulfill his destiny as a patriarch.

The Bible places Jacob in Hebrews 11, along with other great men and women of faith. Concerning Jacob, the author of Hebrews states: “By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff” (Heb 11:21). The wrestling match with the angel has forever changed the course of Jacob’s life, a course that culminates in his fulfilling his divine destiny.

²⁸ Abramsky, 106.

²⁹ Derek Brown, Miles Custis, Douglas Mangum, & Wendy Widder, (2013). “Jacob: Discerning God’s Presence,” ed. J. D. Barry. in *Studies in Faithful Living* (Ge 32:1–33:20). (Bellingham, WA, Lexham Press 2013): Logos Bible Software.

Gideon's Defeat of the Midianites

Like many stories in the Bible, the story of Gideon depicts the operation of God's grace through a flawed human vessel. While Gideon is transformed by his encounters with God, he remains a reluctant hero. Gideon is an example of 1 Co 1:27, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong." His story provides hope that God uses imperfect men and women despite their weaknesses when they yield to His divine plans. Haddox notes that Gideon "is the perfect instrument of YHWH's deliverance, because he has little masculine battle prowess of his own, and is willing to submit to YHWH's will."³⁰ It is through Gideon's weakness that God's glory and goodness become clearly evident. Butler is correct in his observation that "The Gideon material is thus structured around human weakness in leadership mysteriously immersed in divine purpose."³¹

Gideon's story comes during a time of Midianite oppression. The children of Israel have enjoyed forty years of peace under the leadership of Deborah and Barak. Following this forty-year period, the children of Israel "did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord gave them into the hands of Midian seven years" (Jud 6:1). This cycle is typical of the nation of Israel in the book of Judges. In this cycle, Israel falls away from God and into idolatry. In response, God delivers them over to serve other nations. After a period of oppression the children of Israel cry out to God. God raises up a deliverer (a judge) who leads the Israelites to victory. When the judge dies, he once again

³⁰ Susan E. Haddox, "The Lord is With You, You Mighty Warrior": the Question of Gideon's Masculinity," *Proceedings (Grand Rapids, Mich.)* 30, (January 1, 2010): 86.

³¹ Trent C. Butler, *Judges*, vol. 8, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville; Dallas; Mexico City; Rio De Janeiro; Beijing: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 195.

falls into idolatry and the cycle continues. So typical is this cycle, that Lindsay calls this “the formulaic announcement that Yahweh handed them over to an enemy, in this case, Midian.”³² The first five verses of chapter six are devoted to what Butler calls, “Yahweh’s response to the new cycle of apostasy.”³³ Israel has developed a history of crying out to God in times of oppression, but forgetting and forsaking Him in times of prosperity.

The sixth chapter of Judges begins with the children of Israel hiding out in caves and dens to escape the Midianites and Amalekites who would come and raid their livestock and their produce. The Midianites and Amalekites would “come up with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to devastate it” (Jud 6:5). This is a picture of total defeat and humiliation and fear. Nowhere do we see the children of Israel fighting back. They have accepted their defeat. In the midst of this they cry out to God. In response to their cry God sends an unnamed prophet who tells them that God said not to fear the Gods of the Amorites, but they did not obey Him. Claasens understands that “the point of the prophet’s message is to remind Israel once again who God is.”³⁴ God makes it plain that the oppression they were enduring was the result of their disobedience and not their God ordained destiny. Beck comments that the “Midianite invasion was a symptom of a larger crisis, the Canaanization of Israelite society and the adoption of Baal

³² Butler, 196.

³³ Daniel Isaac Block, *Judges, Ruth*, vol. 6, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 251.

³⁴ Juliana M. Claasens, "The Character of God in Judges 6-8: The Gideon Narrative as Theological and Moral Resource," *Horizons In Biblical Theology* 23, no. 1 (June 1, 2001): 57.

as god.”³⁵ This cycle of deliverance and apostasy repeats itself through much of Israel’s history.

In response to their cry, the angel of the Lord comes to Gideon, who is beating wheat in the wine press in order to hide it from the Midianites. Normally wheat would be threshed in an open area. Lindsay observes that “Gideon’s act of threshing wheat in a winepress reflected both his fear of discovery by the Midianites and the smallness of his harvest.”³⁶ His hiding shows that Gideon has accepted the same fate as the rest of his brethren. The angel greets Gideon by declaring, “The Lord is with you, O valiant warrior” (Jud 6:12). The Bible declares that God “calls things that are not as though they were” (Rom 4:17). Whether or not the angel is operating in this manner is not clear. What is clear is that what he is declaring is completely out of phase with the way Gideon views himself and his fellow Israelites. This is the beginning of God’s transformation of Gideon into a man who will be used to deliver Israel.

Gideon responds to the angel by asking, “if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?” (Jud 6:13). He has endured seven years of oppression meted out by the Midianites. He could not reconcile the great events of his people’s history, such as the exodus from Egypt and their entry into the Promised Land, with the suffering they were enduring at the hands of their enemy. His conclusion is that God has abandoned them. Gideon’s statement reflects the bitterness of his heart. Claasens recognizes that Gideon’s response shows “that Gideon is unsure of the ability of God’s power to work through

³⁵ John A. Beck, “Gideon, Dew, and the Narrative-Geographical Shaping of Judges 6:33-40,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165, no. 657 (January 1, 2008): 31.

³⁶ F. Duane Lindsey, “Judges,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 391–392.

him.”³⁷ The suffering Gideon has endured has kept him from recognizing the presence of God. Beck correctly observes that Gideon’s response “helps reveal the crisis as Gideon saw it. It is difficult to give God undivided respect and loyalty when His power and presence are so inconspicuous.”³⁸

It is interesting that the Lord’s response did not even address Gideon’s questions. The Lord simply instructs Gideon, “Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?” (v 14). God is under no obligation to defend His actions. He is clearly changing Gideon’s focus from that of the victim to that of a warrior. Was this comment directly from the Lord? Walvoord and Zuck contend that the angel of the Lord was speaking “as the Lord and commissioned Gideon to go . . . and save Israel out of Midian’s hand.”³⁹ Butler differs in declaring, “Yahweh speaks clearly for himself, no longer hidden behind the ‘messenger.’ He has a clear commission for Gideon.”⁴⁰ Whether directly or indirectly, Gideon is being given a message from God and he understands the message in that manner.

Gideon responds by defending his reluctance. He reminds the Lord that he is the weakest man, from the lowest family, of the smallest tribe (v 15). Gideon requests a sign from the Lord, to prove that it is in fact He who is speaking. He prepares a meal consisting of goat and unleavened bread. The angel takes his staff and touches the meat, causing fire to arise and consume the meat and the bread. The angel then vanishes. Gideon is now gripped with fear. He knows he has seen the angel of the Lord and is

³⁷ Claasens, 59.

³⁸ Beck, 32.

³⁹ Lindsay, 392.

⁴⁰ Butler, 202.

afraid he will die. Robinson recognizes Gideon's response as a godly fear. He comments, "It was the kind of fear the Bible exhorts us to have: a deep reverence for God and a desire to please him. It brought words of assurance from the Lord."⁴¹ Gideon's response is typical of men and women who called on God to lead their people. Both Moses (Ex 3:11,12) and Jeremiah (Jer 1:5-8) responded with similar incredulity. In all three cases God responds by saying, "I will be with you" (Jud 6:16).

The angel then vanishes. It is at this point where Gideon realizes that he did indeed have a divine encounter. His response is one of fear; he has seen the angel of the Lord. God then comforts Him and reassures him that he will not die. Gideon builds an altar and names it *Jehovah-Shalom* (the Lord is peace). Tanner observes that God desires leaders "who would simply worship Him and take Him at His word."⁴² In erecting the altar, Gideon demonstrates this heart of worship.

Encounters with God are not just for dramatic effect. They serve to reveal who God is and to commission individuals to fulfill their destiny. Thomas Dozeman observes that there are six stages to divine commissioning:

1. Divine Confrontation
2. Introductory word
3. Commission
4. Objection
5. Reassurance
6. Sign⁴³

⁴¹ Simon J Robinson, *Opening up Judges*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 37.

⁴² Paul J. Tanner, "The Gideon Narrative as the Focal Point of Judges," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149, no. 594 (April 1, 1992): 160.

⁴³ Handout from Dr. Dozeman during United Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry intensive session, August 2013.

Gideon has had his confrontation and his introductory word. It is at this point where the commissioning begins. God tells Gideon to destroy the altar of Baal and erect an altar to the Lord God in its place (v25, 26). Derby comments that the people need to be cleansed of Baal worship before they can be led into battle against the Midianites.⁴⁴ Gideon takes ten men and obeys God. He does it at night, as he is afraid of his family and the men of his town (Jud 6:27). Gideon's fear of destroying the altar to Baal shows that his transformation is a process, not a one-time event. Digges comments that Gideon "unites the paradoxical qualities of caution and brashness, timidity and courage."⁴⁵ While Gideon is no longer hiding out in the winepress threshing wheat, he is not yet the strong warrior ready to deliver Israel with only three hundred men.

When the men of the town discover what Gideon has done they are outraged and command Joash, his father, to bring Gideon out so they may kill him. Joash defends Gideon, stating that if Baal is a god, he should be able to defend himself. It is at this point that Gideon is called Jerubbaal, meaning "Let Baal contend against him" (Judges 6:32).

The Spirit of the Lord clothes Gideon and he sends messengers to four tribes to assemble his army. Gideon, still unsure about his call, asks God for a sign to ensure him that God is delivering Israel by his hand. He lays a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If the next morning the fleece is wet and the ground is dry, then he will know that God has called him. The next morning he wrings out the fleece and it contains enough water to fill a bowl. Gideon, however, is still not convinced and asks God for yet another sign. Once again he puts out a fleece but this time he requests that the ground be wet and the

⁴⁴ Josiah Derby, "Gideon or Jerubaal," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (July 1, 2003): 182.

⁴⁵ Laurentia M Digges, "Gideon's Trumpet Call," *Worship* 35, no. 10 (November 1, 1961): 645.

fleece be dry. Once again, God answers. This account continues to follow Dozeman's pattern. In response to Gideon's objection, God reassures him with a sign.

How should Gideon's actions regarding the fleece be interpreted? Is it correct to set out fleeces before the Lord as Gideon did? Tanner believes that "Gideon's request for a fleece is an expression of doubt and lack of faith,"⁴⁶ as he already knew God's will. At the same time, Tanner does recognize that, through all of these events, God is working with Gideon to "bring him to a point of worship and faith."⁴⁷ Robinson perceives the compassion of God in this portion of Gideon's story. He recognizes that, instead of treating these verses as a pattern for guidance, we should see them as an example of God's care.⁴⁸

It is in focusing on God's response to Gideon that the correct perspective is identified. Scripture chronicles several cases of God judging doubt and fear. In Luke, the angel of the Lord renders Zacharias mute because he did not believe the angel's words (Lk 1:20). In the account of Peter walking on water, he begins to sink when his focus shifts from Jesus to the winds and the waves. Reaching out to rescue him, Jesus responds by asking, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt 14:31). God, however, does not respond this way with Gideon. Pechawer recognizes this in commenting, "God knows the heart of the person. He knows whether the request for a sign comes from a true desire to know his will or is an act of doubt and disbelief."⁴⁹ Gideon's fleece is not born out of

⁴⁶ Tanner, 158.

⁴⁷ Tanner, 160.

⁴⁸ Robinson, 41–42.

⁴⁹ Larry Pechawer, *Poetry and Prophecy*, vol. 3, Standard Reference Library: Old Testament (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2008), 118.

obstinacy or rebellion. While he has heard of the power of God to deliver his people, he has not experienced it in his life or the life of those around him. He is a man coming to grips with a calling beyond his wildest dreams. Redford understands, “[While] God steadfastly resists any human attempt to ‘test’ him, the Scriptures demonstrate that he has on several occasions determined to meet the human need for reassurance.”⁵⁰ This is an encouragement for those who have identified with the father of the epileptic boy, “I do believe; help my unbelief” (Mk 9:24).

The next morning, Gideon assembles his troops and camps to the south of the Midianites. The Lord tells Gideon that he has too many people and that they would boast that they defeated Midian by their own hands. God instructs Gideon to have all those who are fearful leave, resulting in twenty-two thousand out of thirty-two thousand returning home. Despite reducing the number of men by over two-thirds, God says there are still too many. He then has Gideon take the remaining men to the water, separating the ones who drink water by lapping like a dog from those who kneel to drink. The three hundred men who kneel to drink are kept and the rest are sent home. Gideon’s army, which was once thirty-two thousand, is now reduced to three hundred men. Less than one percent of the original army remains. Why would God reduce the army to such a small fraction of the original? One reason, previously stated, was to ensure that God, not the Israelites, received the glory. In reducing the army drastically, God also is showing Gideon that He is sufficient to deliver Him. God alone is more than enough. Robinson recognizes that “There will often be times when God strips away the things or the people we lean on and brings us into situations in which we become very aware of our weaknesses. This makes

⁵⁰ Redford, 68–69.

us more dependent upon him and provides greater potential to glorify him.”⁵¹ This is the case with Gideon, and should serve as an encouragement for all who follow the Lord. As Jonathan said hundreds of years later when going into battle with just his armor carrier, “the Lord is not restrained to save by many or by few” (1 Sa 14:6).

The Lord then instructs Gideon to go down to the Midianite’s camp at night. If Gideon is still afraid he is to take his servant Purah with him. There they will hear what the Midianites will say which will further encourage Gideon. Tanner is critical of Gideon’s actions remarking “The irony is stunning: hearing the promise directly from the Lord did not convince Gideon, but hearing it from the Midianite soldier did.”⁵² This is a harsh judgment. Gideon went in response to God telling him to go if he was afraid. By heeding God’s word, he was allowing himself to be strengthened for the battle. Gideon goes to the camp and hears one of the Midianites relating a dream. “Behold, I had a dream; a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat” (Jud 8:13). His friend replies by saying, “This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand” (v 14). Digges considers this dream to be a pivotal point in Gideon’s transformation into a bold warrior.⁵³ Upon hearing this, Gideon worships God and returns to his camp, gathers his men and defeats the Midianites.

After the defeat of the Midianites, Gideon declines a request to rule over his fellow Israelites, stating that “the Lord shall rule over you” (Jud 8:23). He does however

⁵¹ Robinson, 43–44.

⁵² Tanner, 159.

⁵³ Digges, 649.

continue to function as a judge over Israel. His tenure as a judge is far from perfect. At one point, Gideon has everyone provide an earring as spoil. He then takes the earrings and makes it into an ephod. Ultimately the ephod becomes an object of worship and ensnares Gideon and his followers. Koopmans recognizes the similarity between Gideon's actions and that of Aaron and the golden calf, calling both accounts as "forms of spiritual prostitution—blatant unfaithfulness to God, the husband of his people."⁵⁴ Despite his failings, the children of Israel enjoyed forty years of peace during the rest of Gideon's life.

How should Gideon's life be remembered? What can be learned from his life? Block objects to those who view Gideon's life favorably, such as Josephus who claims "that [Gideon] excelled in every virtue."⁵⁵ Instead Block argues that their "idealized picture can be maintained only by disregarding an impressive list of contrary data."⁵⁶ Koopmans believes that Gideon's life in many ways was representative of the nation of Israel, contending that Gideon "made a verbal profession of faith in God that was soon mitigated by selfish, sinful distraction."⁵⁷

While Gideon's mistakes should not be ignored they in no way detract from his transformation from a fearful man into a warrior who God used to deliver His people. Digges observes that the story of Gideon is "a call to assume leadership and power in order that God, through him, may save Israel. As always, the call comes in an individual

⁵⁴ William T. Koopmans, "Guile and Grief in Gideon's Gold: a Sermon on Judges 8:27," *Calvin Theological Journal* 37, no. 1 (April 1, 2002): 100.

⁵⁵ Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987).

⁵⁶ Daniel I. Block, "Will the Real Gideon Please Stand Up? Narrative Style and Intention in Judges 6-9," *Journal Of The Evangelical Theological Society* 40, no. 3 (September 1, 1997): 359.

⁵⁷ Koopmans, 102.

way to one unique human being.”⁵⁸ The man who defeats the Midianites with an army of three hundred men is clearly a very different man than the one hiding out, threshing wheat in the wine press.

The focus of Gideon’s life should not just be on Gideon but on the God who transformed him. In many ways, Gideon’s life is a testimony to God’s grace and His patience. Time and again, God is there to encourage Gideon, to help him overcome his fears. One could argue that God delivered Israel despite Gideon’s weaknesses. In that case, Gideon’s story gives hope that God uses imperfect men and women as vessels to display His power and majesty.

The ultimate tribute to Gideon’s life comes from Hebrews eleven. There he is mentioned with other heroes of faith such as Abraham, Sarah, Sampson, and David. These are men and women who are testimonies to God’s transforming power despite their imperfections. Despite all his failings, Gideon has his place among Hebrews as a man of faith, an encouragement to all who continue to follow the Lord.

Paul on the Road to Damascus

One of the most dramatic conversion stories in all of Scripture is that of Saul of Tarsus, who became known as the Apostle Paul. Paul is quite possibly the most important historical figure in the history of Christianity outside of Jesus Himself. As F.F. Bruce has stated, "no single event, apart from the Christ-event itself, has proved so determinant for

⁵⁸ Digges, 645.

the course of Christian history as the conversion and commissioning of Paul.”⁵⁹ The transformation in Paul from a Christian persecuting Pharisee to an ardent disciple is startling.

Paul was raised in Tarsus, a major population center in the province of Cilicia in the southeastern region of Asia Minor.⁶⁰ As a young man he went to Jerusalem where he studied under Gamaliel, a noted rabbi and grandson of Hillel.⁶¹ Saul was, by his own admission, “a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless” (Phil 3:5-6). He was not only “persecuting the church of God,” he was “trying to destroy it” (Gal 1:13). This desire was driven by his “zeal for ancestral traditions” (Gal 1:14), which justified the use of force as needed to defend Torah. Donaldson explains, “While the concept of zeal in first-century Judaism requires careful consideration, in general terms it referred to the use of force to defend the Torah against a perceived threat.”⁶² Wright points out that the “study of the ancestral traditions, ‘zeal,’ and physical violence directed against a deviant group,”⁶³ was characteristic of some of the Pharisees.

Saul is first mentioned in Acts 8, following the stoning of Stephen. Luke writes that he was “consenting to his death” (Acts 8:1). Paul then goes to every house, dragging

⁵⁹ Bonnie Thurston “Paul on the Damascus Road: The Study of the New Testament and the Study of Christian Spirituality.” *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2003): 229.

⁶⁰ Walter Elwell, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1621-162.

⁶¹ John Drane, *Introducing the Bible*, 2 ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 472.

⁶² Terrence L. Donaldson, “Zealot and Convert: The Origin of Paul’s Christ-Torah Antithesis,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (1989): 655.

⁶³ N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God, vol.1, The New Testament and the People of God* (London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1992), 192.

men and women to prison (Acts 8:30). By his own account, he was “enraged against them,” “compelled them to blaspheme,” even to the point of “persecuting them to foreign cities” (Acts 26:11). Clearly, Paul is obsessed with destroying the church and is willing to employ any means to that end. Longenecker notes that, “what motivated Saul of Tarsus to persecute early believers in Jesus was his firm commitment to the Jewish religion and his wholehearted acceptance of the Pharisaic interpretation of that religion.”⁶⁴ According to John Wade, Paul was “obsessed with the idea of stamping out Christianity.”⁶⁵ Paul is being motivated by hatred and judgment. No love or compassion is present in any of his actions.

Three accounts of Paul’s conversion occur in Scripture, all in the book of Acts. The first, in Acts 9, is a narrative. The other two, in Acts 22 and 26, are Paul’s account of his conversion, the former before the Jews at Jerusalem and the latter before King Agrippa. The first account of Paul’s conversion, in Acts 9, almost appears to be out of place within its literary context. The eighth chapter begins by speaking about Paul’s persecution of the church. The text quickly changes subjects, and the chapter concludes with the account of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch. Like many stories in the Bible, the dramatic story of Paul’s conversion comes without any warning of what is to happen.

Paul is on his way to Damascus, to arrest any Christians who might be there. To Paul, these are people who have turned to other gods and their idolatry must be punished. While in route, he sees a light and is knocked to the ground. He hears a voice that asks,

⁶⁴ Richard N. Longenecker, “Christology: A Realized Hope, a New Commitment, and a Developed Proclamation: Paul and Jesus,” in *The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul’s Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker, McMaster New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 22.

⁶⁵ John W. Wade, *Acts: Unlocking the Scriptures for You*, Standard Bible Studies (Cincinnati, OH: Standard, 1987), 89.

“Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9:4). Saul does not recognize the voice he hears, and asks “Who are you, Lord?” (9:5a). Wall notes that “His ironical use of “Lord” (*kyrios*) is not yet a confession of faith in Jesus but the honest query of a devout Jew who understands the significance of his experience from reading Scripture.”⁶⁶ The voice responds by saying, “It is Jesus that you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5). Jesus tells Saul to get up and go into the city where he will be told what to do. The men with Saul heard a voice but did not see anyone. Saul, now blinded from the experience, proceeds and does not eat or drink for three days. The Bible does not tell us what he was thinking. However, the text does show this: Saul is no longer in control.

God sends Ananias to Saul to pray for him to receive his sight and be filled with the Spirit. Ananias then speaks to Saul, confirming the words that Jesus spoke to him on the road. According to *The New Interpreter's Bible*, “The immediate restoration of Saul’s sight (v 18) and his filling/baptism with the Holy Spirit symbolize God’s confirmation of his salvation (cf. 2:21) and prophetic vocation (cf. 1:8). His turn to action is indicated by ending his fast (9:19a).”⁶⁷ He eats with the disciples and is strengthened. This must have been humbling for Saul. The very Jesus he was persecuting is the One who heals him. The people he had been persecuting are now being used by God to restore him. “When he begins to eat again (see 9:19) and receives his sight (see 9:18), he will have been given time to begin an intense spiritual journey that will fortify him for the work ahead—though he once was blind, now he sees.”⁶⁸ Paul stays with the disciples at Damascus and

⁶⁶ Robert W. Wall, J. Paul Sampley, and N. T. Wright, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Acts - First Corinthians* (New York, NY: Abingdon Press, 2002), 10:150-151.

⁶⁷ Wall, Sampley and Wright, 152.

⁶⁸ Wall, Sampley and Wright, 151.

immediately begins to proclaim Jesus as Messiah; this is a surprising turn of events. In a very short period of time, Paul's entire perspective on life has changed. He had gone from persecuting Christians to proclaiming the very Messiah he so adamantly rejected.

Paul's two testimonial accounts of his conversion provide additional insight into his divine encounter on the Damascus Road. When addressing the Jews at Jerusalem, he remarks how those with him saw the light and were afraid, but did not understand the voice (Acts 22:9). So, while they heard a voice, as the text says in Acts 9, they did not hear or understand the words of Jesus. Perhaps they heard a sound without intelligible speech. Regardless, it is clear that Jesus was speaking to Paul and Paul alone. In speaking to Agrippa, he mentions that they all fell to the ground indicating that they not only saw the light, they were confronted with the power of God (Acts 26:14). In this account we are told that Jesus asks him, "Why are you persecuting Me? It is hard to kick against the goads." Here Jesus tells Paul that he is rescuing him from the Jews and the Gentiles, and He is sending him to them "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:17, 18). To Paul, his response to the vision is that of obedience (Acts 26:19). "Saul's brief exchange with Jesus validates what will become the central claim of his gospel: God made the crucified Jesus alive as Messiah and Lord."⁶⁹

The realization of the suffering servant as Messiah is in stark contrast to the Jewish idea that the Messiah would be one who would come and restore the kingdom of Israel. Ralston understands this when he states, "Immediately Paul was confronted with

⁶⁹ Wall, Sampley and Wright, 151.

what he had already dismissed as impossible: the crucified One was both resurrected and exalted, the last act showing God's approval of the One so cursed.”⁷⁰ Paul is also confronted with the revelation that Jesus is the Messiah to all peoples, both Jew and Gentile. Taking the gospel to the Gentiles, those without a covenant, is a major paradigm shift for Paul. While Paul will continue to proclaim Jesus as Messiah to the Jews, he never questions that He is the Messiah to the Gentiles as well.

So dramatic was Paul’s experience that he did not question its validity. No record is mentioned of an inner struggle between his conviction that the church needed to be destroyed and the revelation he received of Jesus as Messiah. Wall comments, “Jesus is not another dead pretender to the messianic throne but is alive and is Christ indeed. What real choice does Saul have other than to embrace his future?”⁷¹ Paul was confronted with the reality that Jesus was his Messiah. As a man trained to live a life of obedience to God, only one rational response is possible: to forsake all, and follow Him. Corley points out that Paul’s conversion is an example of “the primacy of God’s grace over human despair.”⁷² Saul, the Pharisee, encountered the grace of God on the road to Damascus and grace triumphed.

Paul’s experience on the Damascus road completely and forever alters his perception of what it means to follow God. Rather than following a written code, he was now following a person. Donaldson observes, “Paul can be seen as one who underwent a

⁷⁰ T. J. Ralston, “The Theological Significance of Paul’s Conversion.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147, no. 586 (April 1990): 212.

⁷¹ Wall, Sampley and Wright, 151.

⁷² Bruce Corley, “History of Interpretation: Interpreting Paul’s Conversion—Then and Now,” in *The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul’s Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker, McMaster New Testament Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 2.

paradigm-shift, a transfer of allegiance from one set of world-structuring convictions to another.”⁷³ This dramatic shift could not have been prompted without an equally dramatic encounter. A theological debate would never have produced such a staggering change in Paul. It took a supernatural encounter for him to forsake much of his training and embrace Jesus as the Messiah.

This is not to say that Paul rejected his Judaism. Wall assures, “Paul is converted to Jesus and not from one religion to another.”⁷⁴ Donaldson accurately states, “he continued to believe in the same God, and to see himself as a Jew.”⁷⁵ This is a critical point that has practical application today. Modern Jews believe that to accept Jesus is to forsake their Jewishness. Stan Telchin is an orthodox Jew whose daughter accepted Jesus as Messiah. When faced with this fact, he comments, “For any of us to believe that Jesus is the Messiah is to betray our people.”⁷⁶ For Jewish people to accept Jesus, they must realize that they are not forsaking their heritage but are in fact accepting their Messiah. This is vital to successfully evangelizing the Jewish people.

While Paul’s experience allowed him to embrace the Messiah while remaining Jewish, his theology was forever changed. His upbringing taught him that salvation came from keeping the law, and adherence to a set of commands. He now realizes that salvation comes by way of grace, a gift that is received by faith. How does he reconcile these two seemingly contradictory viewpoints within a common faith? When did that realization occur? Donaldson states, “There are those who argue that Paul's distinctive

⁷³ Donaldson, 676.

⁷⁴ Wall, Sampley and Wright 154.

⁷⁵ Donaldson, 676.

⁷⁶ Stan Telchin, *Betrayed!* rev. ed. . (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2007), 103.

thinking about the Torah developed only later, in response to circumstances emerging subsequently in the life of the church and in his experience as an apostle.”⁷⁷ While this is possible, it is unlikely: there is nothing in Paul’s writings that indicate he wrestled with the concept of salvation being a free gift. After his conversion, he never implies that keeping the law is a requirement for salvation. If the law were a requirement for salvation, then how would those outside the covenant be saved?

Donaldson correctly states:

In his Damascus experience Paul became convinced that God had provided in Christ a universal means of salvation, available to Jew and Gentile alike on the same terms. His rejection of the Torah as a means of salvation is a consequence of this more fundamental conviction; since salvation is through Christ, it cannot be through the law.⁷⁸

This is a key element in many of Paul’s teachings. Paul never rejected the Torah as being inspired by God. He did, however, come to realize that salvation could not be achieved through keeping the law. Rather than rejecting the law, Paul saw the law “as our tutor to lead us to Christ” (Gal 3:24). This is key, as this theology enabled Paul to embrace his Jewishness and at the same time also embrace Jesus as Savior to both Jew and Gentile. It was during his conversion that Paul realized salvation was an act of grace, freely available to all. In Romans he states, “By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.” (Rom 3:20). He has come to realize that not only the Gentile, but also the Jews under the law, are unable to be justified in the sight of God. What is the answer? “We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.” (Rom 3:28).

⁷⁷ Donaldson, 660.

⁷⁸ Donaldson, 660.

Why did God strike Paul with blindness? For three days Paul had to be led around by others. He was at the mercy of his companions. This was one more way that God reinforced the fact that Paul had a destiny and that God was in control. God had already made provision for Paul's healing by speaking to Ananias. Through this entire process, God was revealing Himself to Paul, confirming the call and confirming the certainty of his calling.

Is Paul's experience a conversion or a call? As Hoerber has noted, "Scholars often have disagreed about whether this experience of Paul is best understood as a conversion or as a call to a specific mission as apostle to the Gentiles."⁷⁹ He goes on to conclude, "In many ways the question of whether Paul's Damascus Road experience was a call or a conversion is an artificial one. It is both call and conversion."⁸⁰ This assessment is the most probable, along with adding that the conversion was part of the call. Paul was called to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, something that first required his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. Apart from the conversion, no fulfillment of the call could occur. Yet not only was the conversion process part of the call, it was also equipping Paul for his future call. It was on the road to Damascus that Jesus revealed Himself to Paul as Savior, Messiah. It was clear that God was apprehending Paul, not because he was seeking it, but because it was his destiny.

Paul's destiny was dramatically changed on the Damascus road. In what ways was Paul changed? Earlier it was established that his conversion was part of the call. The call required Paul himself to first be changed. Paul, speaking of his past life, declares:

⁷⁹ R. G. Hoerber. "Paul's Conversion/Call." *Concordia Journal* 22, no. 2 (April 1996): 186.

⁸⁰ Hoerber, 188.

I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ" (Phil 3:8-9).

In meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul found the one thing that he would pursue the rest of his life. Knowing Him became so all-encompassing that Paul experienced beatings, stonings, and being left for dead, yet he considered these events "light afflictions" (2 Co 4:17). Saul of Tarsus became Paul the Apostle. McDonough observes that "the name change in Acts 13 serves for the author of Acts as a vivid illustration of Paul's transformation from the proud 'big man' who persecuted the church, to the servant of 'little' David's messianic offspring."⁸¹ Gone is the anger that marked Saul of Tarsus. In its place is a man "constrained by love" (2 Co 5:14). The man who approved of Stephen's stoning is now willing to be stoned himself, in the service of his king, so that others might know Him. One aspect of Paul's nature that was not changed, however, was his zeal. God did not remove Paul's zeal; rather, He refined and redirected it. The same zeal that Saul of Tarsus exhibited against Christians was now redirected to seeing all people accept the Messiah.

The Samaritan Woman at the Well

The story of the Samaritan woman at the well is in stark contrast to the other three stories (Jacob, Gideon and Paul) presented here. Jacob was the grandson of Abraham, called to be a patriarch of Israel. Gideon was transformed into a warrior who rescued a nation and became its judge. The Apostle Paul wrote a significant portion of the New

⁸¹ Sean McDonough, "Small Change: Saul to Paul, Again," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125, no. 2 (2006): 391.

Testament and is quite possibly the most important individual in the history of Christianity other than Jesus.

In contrast, the Samaritan woman at the well is not a story of someone destined for greatness on a national or international scale. God does not transform her into an apostle or world leader. There are no references to her in Scripture or historical records outside of her encounter with Jesus in John 4. It is a story of God, in His grace, reaching out and transforming someone who society considered unimportant, someone considered unworthy by the religious Jewish orthodoxy. As Troop observes, “The reality of the Divine Redeemer’s human nature is beautifully manifested in the touching interview between the weary Saviour and the guilty Samaritan woman at the well.”⁸² It is a clear picture of a loving God reaching out to all regardless of their standing in society or background.

Jesus is on his way from Judea to Galilee. The Bible declares “He had to pass through Samaria” (John 4:4). O’Day observes that while the route through Samaria was the quickest, “most Jewish travelers would pick an alternate route rather than come in contact with Samaritans.”⁸³ Since there were other routes that would enable Jesus to reach his destination, what does the text mean in saying “He had to pass through Samaria?” O’Day comments “Jesus’ vocation compelled him to make the gift of God available to those whom Jewish religious orthodoxy deemed unworthy.”⁸⁴ Nash concurs,

⁸² Canon G. Osborne Troop, *Chapter IX: The Internal Evidence of the Fourth Gospel*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005), 199.

⁸³ Gail R. O’Day, *The Word Disclosed: Preaching the Gospel of John*, rev. and expanded. ed. (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002), 35.

⁸⁴ O’Day 35.

noting that by taking this route Jesus was fulfilling his “appointed encounter.”⁸⁵ This is consistent with the nature of Jesus. Stalker observes that Jesus was always “willing to speak with a single individual, however humble. He seized every opportunity of doing so.”⁸⁶ While His encounter with the woman appears to be a chance meeting as a result of Jesus resting on His journey, it is in fact a divine encounter, one borne out of the heart of God to reach those that society deems unworthy.

Jesus, weary from His journey, sits by Jacob’s well to rest. A Samaritan woman comes to draw water. Jesus initiates the conversation with the woman by asking her to give him something to drink (John 4:8). The woman is surprised Jesus is talking to her, and responds by asking, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” (v 9). Keener comments that the Jews “would have especially avoided Samaritan women, who, they declared, were unclean from birth.”⁸⁷ Jesus does not respond to her question. He clearly does not want to get drawn into a discussion of acceptable social norms. He has a far deeper purpose in this conversation. Instead He responds by saying, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:10). This is a cryptic statement. First, He asks the woman for a drink. He then responds to her question by telling her that if she understood who she was talking to, that she would be asking Him for a drink.

⁸⁵ Ronald H. Nash, “Aren’t the Gospels the Product of Greek Thinking?,” in *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith*, ed. Ted Cabal et al. (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2007), 1576.

⁸⁶ James Stalker, *The Life of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Henry A. Sumner and Company, 1882), 79.

⁸⁷ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Jn 4:7.

In many ways, this cryptic response is similar to the conversation Jesus had with Nicodemus in John chapter three. Nicodemus meets with Jesus at night and comments that the miracles He performs proves that Jesus must be from God. Jesus responds by saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Jesus’ response seems completely detached from Nicodemus statement. It is a statement that Nicodemus cannot understand. Yet it grabs his attention and leads Nicodemus to a greater understanding of the kingdom of God. Jesus’ comments all have a definite purpose, and that is to lead the person to the Father. O’Day observes that Nicodemus and the woman “are at opposite ends of the social, political, and religious spectrum.”⁸⁸ However, despite their vastly different social standings, they have a similar need: to recognize Jesus as Messiah and be restored to fellowship with God.

The woman’s response demonstrates that Jesus has successfully piqued her curiosity. She wonders how He will get the water out of a deep well. She then mentions “our father Jacob” to Jesus. In doing this, she is appealing to the Samaritan belief that they are also descendants of Jacob. Keener recognizes that her comment would be considered “an affront to the Jewish teaching that the Jewish people were children of Jacob, and the Samaritans were at best half-breeds.”⁸⁹ It is clear from her statement that she is still thinking in terms of physical water. Jesus responds by saying that whomever drinks of this living water will never drink again and that this living water will become “a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:14). By making a reference to eternal life, Jesus is revealing that He is speaking of something more than natural water. The

⁸⁸ O’Day 33.

⁸⁹ Keener, Jn 4:12.

woman responds by asking Jesus for the water so that she will never thirst or have to come back to the well to draw water. Her statement regarding drawing water from the well shows that she still does not fully grasp what Jesus is offering, and how could she? She is, like many people, so fixed on the immediate needs of this life that she fails to comprehend the riches of the kingdom of God. None of this dissuades Jesus from His mission, to “seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk 19:10).

At this point He tells her to call her husband. On the surface, this seems like a strange request, a departure from the subject of living water. The woman responds by saying that she does not have a husband. Jesus knows this and tells her that she has had five husbands and the one she is presently with is not her husband. He has now revealed to her that he is more than an ordinary man. O’Day observes that the history of the woman’s five husbands is presented quite disinterestedly, with no suggestion or coloring of moral outrage or judgement.”⁹⁰ Jesus is not looking to condemn the woman. That is not his purpose. By disclosing details of her life he would not know except by divine revelation, He is revealing that He is more than a mere man. The woman responds by calling him a prophet, a logical conclusion based on Jesus’ last comments. How else could a stranger know these facts about her life?

The Samaritan woman recognized the significance of her encounter. When Jesus revealed to her that He knew of her marital status she did not ask Him how He knew. She did not probe to see if He had asked people about her. She recognized that this was a supernatural word that He could not have known unless God was involved. The woman no longer wonders why a Jew would have a conversation with a Samaritan woman.

⁹⁰O’Day, 47.

O'Day realizes, "She is no longer concerned only with social propriety, however. Instead she moves to the heart of the religious divide with someone she perceives to be a prophet."⁹¹ Her heart has been stirred by this conversation with Jesus.

The woman turns the conversation to the subject of worship, saying that her ancestors worshipped on this mountain but the Jews say that God should be worshipped in Jerusalem. What started as a request for water has turned into a conversation about worshipping God. Jesus responds by making a clear distinction between the beliefs of the Samaritans and the Jews. He says, "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). On the surface, this appears to be a potentially divisive comment. However, knowing the heart of the woman, that her hunger for God has been stirred, this comment intensifies her curiosity. He then reveals that "true worshippers worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). She responds by saying that when the Messiah comes, He will reveal all things. Jesus responds by saying, "I who speak to you am He" (John 4:26).

Jesus' response is a clear declaration as to who He is. This direct response is very different from many of His more obscure references to His nature. He never clearly tells Nicodemus who He is. He is often obscure in His conversations with the masses and the Pharisees. However, with the woman, He leaves no doubt, no room for misunderstanding. He is openly declaring that He is the Messiah. Blum recognizes that this statement

⁹¹O'Day, 49.

essentially completes the discourse in noting, “The particular force of the statement here needs to be noted. *The conversation is finished!*”⁹²

Immediately after Jesus’ Messianic declaration, the disciples arrive, shifting the focus of the conversation. Though they are surprised Jesus is speaking to a woman, they do not comment. The woman leaves her water pot and goes into the city proclaiming that she has found the Messiah. Why does she leave her water pot? Perhaps in the excitement she simply forgot it. Perhaps she is taking the statement of never thirsting again literally, and she assumes she no longer needs it. Perhaps she is simply leaving it there because she plans to return to it. Regardless of the reason, it is clear she has been profoundly impacted by her conversation with Jesus. She knows that this is not just a random conversation with a weary stranger, but an encounter with the Messiah.

The disciples, knowing the length of the journey, urge Jesus to eat. He responds by saying, “I have food to eat that you do not know about” (John 4:32). The disciples interpret this as physical food. Jesus clarifies the comment by stating, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34), referring to the harvest. Jesus stopped to speak to one woman, and in doing so He accomplished God’s will. Heidi Baker, missionary to Mozambique, recognizes the worth of the engaging with individuals in declaring, “Whether God sends you to a vast multitude or to twenty-five people, He has called you to be significant. He has called each of us to live in His presence and to stop for the one He puts in front of us each day.”⁹³

⁹² Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1–11*, vol. 25A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 210.

⁹³ Heidi Baker, *Birthing the Miraculous* (Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2014), 23.

The woman returns with the Samaritans, curious to meet the man who told the woman “all the things that I have done” (John 4:39). They come to believe in Jesus after hearing Him, testifying that they believe because of what they have heard, and no longer because of what she has said. At their request, Jesus stays with them two more days. Baker observes, “Jesus reached one woman, but the woman reached an entire village.”⁹⁴

What is the significance of this story? Schnieders sees the story as a metaphor, stating, “The entire dialogue between Jesus and the woman is the wooing of Samaria to full covenant fidelity in the New Israel by Jesus, the New Bridegroom.”⁹⁵ Gench believes that “she would have been perceived by first-century readers as a symbolic wife, and as such, her role in the narrative is largely a passive one: she is a foil for Jesus’ self-revelation.”⁹⁶

To view this account in symbolic terms is to miss the point. To see the Samaritan’s role as passive as Gench does is to view her as an object, someone used by Jesus for more noble purposes. Both Schneiders’ and Gench’s views devalue the worth of the woman. What is compelling about this story is that this is not about someone famous or destined for greatness. The woman at the well is not mentioned again in Scripture. She had five husbands. Whether they divorced her or they died, she lived with a sense of rejection. Yet the God of the universe stooped down and chose her as his own. Gench points out that Jesus’ encounter with the woman is His longest one-on-one conversation

⁹⁴ This comment was made during a Sunday morning sermon given by Heidi Baker at Iris Ministries, Pemba, Mozambique, June 8, 2014.

⁹⁵ Sandra Marie Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 191.

⁹⁶ Frances Taylor Gench, *Back to the Well: Women’s Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 124.

in Scripture.⁹⁷ This one seemingly insignificant woman is valuable to God and worthy of an encounter with Jesus.

The Samaritan woman's encounter is also significant as it was in many ways different than the other encounters discussed in this thesis. Jacob had a dramatic encounter wrestling with an angel. Gideon's encounter began with an angelic visitation. Paul on the road to Damascus is knocked to the ground, sees a light, hears a voice and is struck blind. The woman's encounter was not nearly as dramatic. Her encounter began with what appeared to be a harmless conversation with a stranger stopping to rest. As Kenneth Hagin has said, "Many people are looking for the spectacular and missing the supernatural that is right there all the time."⁹⁸ The Samaritan woman did not miss the supernatural. She recognized that this was a divine moment and her life was forever changed.

Conclusion

Dana Hawkins insightfully declares, "We may not have seen the Lord face to face, but our battles, our times of wrestling with man and with God have forever defined us and are creating our legacy here on earth."⁹⁹ Jacob, Gideon, the Samaritan woman at the well, and Paul had very unique experiences. Jacob was alone, separated from the rest of his caravan when he wrestled the angel. Gideon was hiding from the Midianites when the angel appeared to him. The Samaritan woman had what appeared to be a chance

⁹⁷ Gench, 110.

⁹⁸ Kenneth E. Hagin, *How You Can Be Led by the Spirit of God*, Second Edition, Faith Library Publications (Tulsa, OK: K. Hagin Ministries, 1989), 34.

⁹⁹ Dana Hawkins, *Wrestling with an Angel: Fighting for Faith in Times of Struggle* (Springhill, TN: DPI - Discipleship Publications International, 2012), 13.

encounter with a stranger resting on his journey. Paul was with a group of men on the road to Damascus. While they hear a voice, no one but Paul sees the light. It appears that when the Bible says they “heard a voice,” they may have heard a sound, but no one else recognized the words that Paul heard. These experiences were each unique and deeply personal. These accounts teach, “Religion is about the experience of transforming power.”¹⁰⁰ As was stated in the beginning of this chapter, God has a way of getting a person’s attention; these examples illustrate that fact. The wrapper that the divine experience comes in is not as important as the work He does in the human heart. Klein muses, “Our deepest encounter with God is sometimes almost ineffable, almost inexpressible. We can celebrate it and share it, but it may not be the encounter with God that others will find meaningful.”¹⁰¹ As a person encounters God and hears His heart, his/her identity is changed and he/she is made whole.

It is comforting to know that God is always working on behalf of His people. Jacob and Paul were taken by surprise. King David was called when he was out tending sheep. Moses was on the backside of the desert when he saw the burning bush. Gideon was beating wheat when the angel appeared to him. Jonah was running from God, yet God arrested him. The woman went to the well to draw water and encountered the Savior of the world. The common denominator in all of these events is God’s active involvement in the fulfillment of His will in the lives of men and women, even when they are not actively pursuing Him. Believers can take comfort in the fact that, whether it is a dramatic encounter or a still small voice, God is faithful to see their destinies fulfilled.

¹⁰⁰ Luke Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity: A Missing Dimension in New Testament Studies* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998), 2.

¹⁰¹ Klein, 268.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Introduction

Inner healing is a ministry that addresses the healing of the inner person. It can involve the healing of painful memories, past hurts, and emotional wounds. Michael Scanlan, a priest involved in inner healing ministry, defines the inner person as “the intellectual, volitional and affective areas commonly referred to as mind, will and heart but including such other areas as related to emotions, psyche, soul and spirit.”¹ Through the ministry of inner healing, people can be set free from lies and wounds that have held them captive.

The latter part of the twentieth century has seen an emergence of new, formalized inner healing models. These models spawned the development of ministries dedicated to the practice of inner healing. While today’s formal inner healing ministries are a relatively new development, the healing of the inner person has existed throughout church history. This paper will provide an historical basis for inner healing in support of the author’s presentation of the *Sozo* inner healing model. The specific focus of this chapter will be the life of John G. Lake.

¹ Michael Scanlan, *Inner Healing* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1974), 9.

Historical Basis for Inner Healing

Inner healing within Christianity can be traced back to the first century. Philo records how remedies were applied that “healed the souls of those who came to them, by relieving them like physicians, of evil passions.”² Origen, the third century scholar, spoke about the power of the Word of God in healing the soul. Origen comments, “stronger than all the evils in the soul is the Word, and the healing power that dwells in Him; and this healing He applies, according to the will of God, to every man.”³ In similar fashion, Basil the Great spoke about the power of the Book of Psalms to heal the soul. He stated the Bible was not only “a treasury of sound teaching,” but also “it provided for every individual need. It heals the old hurts of souls, and brings about recovery where the wound is fresh.”⁴

Gregory of Nazianzus, Archbishop of Constantinople in the fourth century, relates how his sister was healed in body and soul through the Eucharist. He recounts, “She went away at once perceiving that she was healed, with the lightness of health in body and soul

² Eusebius of Caesaria, “The Church History of Eusebius,” in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series: Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1890), 117.

³ Origen, “Origen Against Celsus,” in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian, Part Fourth; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen, Parts First and Second*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. Frederick Crombie, vol. 4 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 667.

⁴ Blomfield Jackson, “Prolegomena: Sketch of the Life and Works of Saint Basil,” in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series: St. Basil: Letters and Select Works*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 8 (New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1895), 45.

and mind.”⁵ Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, praised Theodotus, bishop of Laodicea, in observing, “He excelled in the medical art for bodies, and in the healing art for souls.”⁶ Eusebius is not only distinguishing healing of the soul from healing of the body, he is also establishing that healing includes the restoration of the soul.

John Chrysostom was a monk who eventually became Archbishop of Constantinople in the year 398. He was a skilled orator who set out to reform the life of the church. Chrysostom understood the importance of inner healing. He believed those entrusted with the care of the church had a responsibility to “train it up to a state of healthiness.”⁷ Achieving this state of healthiness required those in ministry to be “versed in all healing proper for the soul.”⁸ He firmly believed God delighted in healing the inner person. Chrysostom was firmly convinced that inner healing, or healing of the soul, should not be a difficult process. He believed, “the healing of the soul is a thing that is easy to procure, and devoid of expense.”⁹

Cassian, a monk and theologian, understood the importance of healing emotional wounds by way of finding the root problem. He likened those involved with inner or soul healing to “clever physicians.” Their responsibility was not only healing, but also

⁵ Darwell Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (London, UK: Longmans, Green, 1909), 107.

⁶ Eusebius, *The Church History of Eusebius*, 1:320.

⁷ John Chrysostom, “Treatise Concerning the Christian Priesthood,” in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series: Saint Chrysostom: On the Priesthood, Ascetic Treatises, Select Homilies and Letters, Homilies on the Statues*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. W. R. W. Stephens, vol. 9 (New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 64.

⁸ Chrysostom, 64.

⁹ Chrysostom, 397.

prevention; their responsibility was to “reveal the causes of the passions which threaten them [the afflicted], and the remedies which will heal them.”¹⁰

Augustine of Hippo recognized the importance of faith in receiving inner healing. He relates his own experience in recounting, “So was it with the health of my soul, which could not be healed but by believing.”¹¹ Augustine understood that freedom was the result of the healing of the soul.¹² He described inner healing as “healing of the soul from the stain of sin,” as an act of God’s grace.¹³

Inner healing was also evident in the lives of many of the Christian mystics. A mystic can be defined as someone who is “deeply aware of the powerful presence of the divine Spirit: someone who seeks, above all, the knowledge and love of God and who experiences to an extraordinary degree the profoundly personal encounter with the energy of divine life.”¹⁴ One notable mystic was Teresa of Avila. Teresa was a sixteenth century Carmelite nun who practiced contemplative prayer. She established convents where “young women could pursue deep lives of deep prayer and devotion.”¹⁵ Teresa believed

¹⁰ John Cassian, “The Twelve Books of John Cassian on the Institutes of the Cœnobia,” in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series: Sulpitius Severus, Vincent of Lérins, John Cassian*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Edgar C. S. Gibson, vol. 11 (New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1894), 279.

¹¹ Augustine of Hippo, “The Confessions of St. Augustin,” in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series: The Confessions and Letters of St. Augustin with a Sketch of His Life and Work*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. G. Pilkington, vol. 1 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 92.

¹² Augustine of Hippo, 92.

¹³ William Burt Pope, *A Compendium of Christian Theology: Being Analytical Outlines of a Course of Theological Study, Biblical, Dogmatic, Historical, Volumes 1-3*, vol. 2 (London, UK: Beveridge and Co., 1879), 422.

¹⁴ Ursula King, *Christian Mystics: Their Lives and Legacies Throughout the Ages* (Mahwah, NJ: HiddenSpring, 2001), Kindle (Locations 13-15).

¹⁵ Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, “Introduction,” in *131 Christians Everyone Should Know* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 266.

contemplative prayer was the doorway to a place of union with God where “the soul enters into peace” and “all faculties are stilled.”¹⁶

In her book *Interior Castle*, Teresa describes the experience of “guiding souls toward spiritual perfection.”¹⁷ Teresa believed in the beauty of the soul, warning against thinking “of the soul as of something dark.”¹⁸ She states, “The soul of the righteous man is nothing but a paradise, in which, as God tells us, He takes His delight.”¹⁹ Teresa believed a place of contentment could be reached through contemplative prayer. In this place, not only would the Christian find delight in God, but that God would also delight in His children.

Another mystic was Madame Jeanne Marie Guyon, a seventeenth century French Quietist. The Quietists believed in contemplative prayer where one communed with God in silence. Madame Guyon comments “It is my highest happiness to see the reign of Jesus Christ extending itself in the hearts of God's people.”²⁰ Guyon, like many of the mystics, understood the importance of an intimate relationship with God in inner healing. She believed, “External religion has too much usurped the place of the religion of the heart.”²¹ To Guyon, “The reign of Christ on earth is nothing more nor less than the subjection of

¹⁶ Saint Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection by Saint Teresa of Avila (a Christian Classic!)* (Colorado Springs, CO: Ignacio Hills Press (TM) IgnacioHillsPress.com and e-Pulp Adventures (TM), 2009), Kindle (Locations 2179-2182).

¹⁷ St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle* (New York, NY: Start Publishing, 2013), Kindle (Locations 18-19).

¹⁸ St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, Kindle (Location 2841).

¹⁹ St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, Kindle (Locations 331-332).

²⁰ Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Motte Guyon, *Letters of Madame Guyon* (n.p.: A Public Domain Book, 2012), Kindle (Locations 122-124).

²¹ Guyon, Kindle (Locations 122-124).

the whole soul to himself.”²² She believed the place of quietness before God brought healing to the inner man. She wrote, “As the air rushes to a vacuum, so God fills the soul emptied of self.”²³ George Fox, Founder of the Society of Friends (also known as the Quakers) was another well-known mystic. Fox understood inner healing to be the result of consecration. He believed, “as people come into subjection to the Spirit of God,”²⁴ they would come to know the hidden unity in the Eternal Being.”²⁵

Spending time in a state of inner quiet is a common thread of all mystic writings. The mystics understood that, as souls sat in silence before God, they would experience His healing and transforming presence. To the mystics, all other activity was secondary to time spent in the Presence of God. “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10) was a major part of the lifestyle of mystics. As they spent time in His presence, they came to know Him, and through that experience they were made whole.

Inner healing continued to be an important part of the church in the nineteenth century. One of the major movements of this period was the Holiness or Higher Life movement. Among the leading voices of this movement was Phoebe Palmer. Like John Wesley, Palmer believed in a complete sanctification. Palmer, however, taught that this place of sanctification could be appropriated by faith. When preaching she would proclaim, “Am I now trusting in Jesus to save to the uttermost? If so, I am now saved

²² Guyon, Kindle (Locations 122-124).

²³ Guyon, Kindle (Locations 163-164).

²⁴ George Fox, *The Life of George Fox (His Memoirs)* (Harrington, DE: Delmarva Publications, 2013), Kindle (Locations 937-940).

²⁵ Fox, Kindle (Locations 937-940).

from all sin.”²⁶ Palmer believed “Power was the natural result of holiness.”²⁷ Holiness did not require an extended period of waiting on God. Instead, it was a present tense fact that was received by faith.

Carrie Judd Montgomery built on Palmer’s theology. The same “immediacy that Palmer ascribed to sanctification, Montgomery later applied to healing.”²⁸ She believed healing by faith applied to both inner healing as well as physical healing. In 1877, she was miraculously healed of a fever of the spine. In recounting this she observes “Even more wonderful and . . . precious than being brought from death unto life physically is the renewed life which the soul experiences under the healing influence of the Holy Spirit.”²⁹

Yet another leading figure of the Holiness movement was Hannah Whitall Smith. Smith believed that a life of trust in God was the key to inner healing. In her classic book, *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*, she writes about the higher Christian life, which is marked by “an entire surrender to the Lord, and a perfect trust in Him, resulting in victory over sin and inward rest of soul.”³⁰ Her belief that resting in God brought contentment to the soul was similar to that of the mystics.

²⁶ Galli, 224.

²⁷ Jennifer A. Miskov (January 2011), “Missing Links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and Holiness Roots within Pentecostalism,” *Pentecostudies* 10, no. 1: 8-28, 14, accessed November 26, 2013, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*.

²⁸ Miskov, 15.

²⁹ Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 312.

³⁰ Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2012), 34.

The nineteenth century also saw the emergence of several individuals whose ministries were marked by signs and wonders. Among these were A.B. Simpson, Andrew Murray, and John G. Lake. They shared a belief that holiness was central to the life of faith. Simpson believed that “dwelling in the secret place of the Most High” (Ps 91:1) was “the secret of holiness, peace, power, victory, and every physical blessing.”³¹ He saw holiness as a gift, not something earned. Simpson stated, “Our holiness is as much His gift as our pardon.”³² Andrew Murray understood the close relationship “between sanctification which is the health of the soul, and the divine healing.”³³ This relationship applied not just to sanctification and physical healing, but inner healing as well. Murray wrote, “Sanctification reminds us that true salvation and true health consist in being holy as God is holy.”³⁴ Simpson, Murray, and Lake all firmly believed that healing applied to the whole person.

John G. Lake Historical Background

John Graham Lake was born March 18, 1870, in Ontario, Canada. One of sixteen children, he moved with his family to Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan, while still a young boy.³⁵ He remained in Michigan until moving to Chicago at the age of twenty-one. Lake first heard the gospel preached at a Salvation Army meeting when he was sixteen years

³¹ A.B. Simpson, *A.B. Simpson's Commentaries on Christ in the Bible* (n.p.: First Rate Publishers, 2012), Kindle (Location 9351)

³² A.B. Simpson, Kindle (Locations 9629-9630).

³³ Andrew Murray, *Divine Healing [illustrated] [annotated]*. (n.p: Niche Edition, 2011), Kindle (Locations 1045-1046).

³⁴ Murray, Kindle (Location 1050).

³⁵ Roberts Liardon, *God's Generals: John G. Lake* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2000), Kindle (Locations 59-60).

old. Soon after that he surrendered his life to the Lord. Speaking of his encounter, Lake would later write, “I made my surrender to Him. The light of heaven broke into my soul, and I arose from my knees a son of God, and I knew it.”³⁶ This would be the first of many encounters that would mark his walk with God.

As a young man, he suffered from chronic constipation. Lake made a decision to trust God for his healing. He told God that he was done with “the arm of the flesh” and was going to “lean totally on the arm of God.”³⁷ While nothing dramatic appeared to happen, the disease was gone. This complete reliance on God regardless of the outcome was a theme of Lake’s life. Lake believed that the Christian life was a life of total consecration, total dependence on God. He comments, “The real Christian is a separated man.”³⁸ He believed that lack of consecration was the reason why many other Christians experienced a weak form of Christianity.

As a Wesleyan-Methodist, Lake believed that sanctification was a second work of grace. He later wrote, “I learned by the Word of God and experienced in my life the sanctifying power of God subduing the soul and cleansing the nature from sin.”³⁹ He believed that holy living was possible and that it followed an experience of sanctification. He believed that the experience of sanctification, “followed by an endless growth of holiness in heart and life, stands forth in marvelous grandeur.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Liardon, Kindle (Locations 60-63).

³⁷ Wilford Reidt, *John G. Lake: A Man Without Compromise* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1989), 14.

³⁸ John G. Lake, *Living in God's Power* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2012), Kindle (Location 531).

³⁹ Reidt, 21.

⁴⁰ Curry R Blake, *John G. Lake's Writings from Africa* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2005), 128.

John G. Lake devoted much of his life to the ministry of healing. This intense desire to see people set free arose out of desperation to see his family healed. He recounts, “For thirty-two years some member of our family was an invalid. During this long period, our home was never without the shadow of sickness.”⁴¹ During this time, eight family members died. Some time later, Lake’s wife Jennie was struck with tuberculosis. The disease worsened and by 1898, she was essentially an invalid. The sickness that had plagued his family growing up had now fastened its grip on his wife. Lake’s dying brother and one of his sisters had both been taken to John Alexander Dowie’s healing home in Chicago where they were miraculously healed. Lake was called home to see another sister who was near death. When he arrived home, his sister was without a pulse. Lake sent a telegram to Dowie, “My sister has apparently died, but my spirit will not let her go. I believe if you will pray, God will heal her.”⁴² Dowie’s response was “Hold on to God. I am praying. She will live.”⁴³ Within an hour she was healed.

Despite these miracles, Jennie’s condition continued to worsen. Feeling hopeless, Lake threw his Bible against the fireplace mantle. It fell open to Acts 10:38, “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” When Lake saw the words “oppressed by the devil,” he realized that God was not the author of sickness. A new boldness and resolve entered his heart and mind to pray for Jennie to be healed. Lake gathered people to pray for Jennie at 9:30 in the morning. The power of God came on Jennie and she was completely healed. The effect of this miracle on Lake and

⁴¹ John G. Lake, *Adventures in God* (Lexington, KY: lulu.com, 2011), 29.

⁴² Liardon, Kindle (Locations 110-111).

⁴³ Liardon, Kindle (Location 112).

his family cannot be underestimated. He believed the church's attitude that the days of miracles were past "robbed mankind of its rightful inheritance through the blood of Jesus."⁴⁴

Lake's experiences forever changed his view concerning the power of God and the Christian life. Christianity became, for Lake, a life marked by the power of God manifesting itself throughout a person's entire being. While physical healing was a major focus of Lake's life, these events helped develop a theology of healing not only for the body, but for the inner person as well. These experiences helped to mold Lake's own theology, that the life and power of God should impact every aspect of an individual's life whether it was physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual.

Hunger for God was a major motivator in the life of John G. Lake. He believed that spiritual hunger was a blessing God would not allow to go unfulfilled. In his sermon *Spiritual Hunger*, he comments, "I wish to God we were desperately hungry. Wouldn't it be glorious?"⁴⁵ Like Madame Guyon, who used the analogy of air rushing in to fill a vacuum, Lake believed that hunger could not remain unfulfilled. Though he had received a sanctifying touch from God, he was still hungry for more. He spent nine months seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit. At the time, he was worn out from his own efforts. He wrote in his diary, "I am so hungry, so tired of trying, so weary of doing things myself. I am sick of sin, sick of self, sick of trying, sick of working, etc. etc."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Lake, *Adventures in God*, 232.

⁴⁵ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 2064-2065).

⁴⁶ Rev. Talbert (Tab) Morgan, *John G. Lake's Life and Diary* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2005), Kindle (Locations 84-85).

Ultimately, Lake received the blessing that he so desperately sought. It felt like a “warm tropical rain.”⁴⁷ Lake experienced a peace he had never known. However, the experience did not yet end, as he then felt shocks of electricity, which he knew was the power of God. “For six months following my baptism in the Holy Ghost,” he later divulged, “the Lord revealed many things in my life where repentance, confession, and restitution were necessary, yet I had repented unto God long ago.”⁴⁸ The result of this experience was “a new comprehension of God’s will, new discernment of spirit, new revelation of God in me.”⁴⁹ As wonderful as his newfound experience was, God was calling him to even greater levels of consecration. This did not come without a struggle. Lake recounts, “Following my baptism in the Holy Ghost came six months of the most terrible fightings.”⁵⁰ While he did not fully understand this experience, he did come to understand the importance of consecration. He recounts, “The Spirit talked to me of giving up all. I did not know what that would mean but, oh brothers and sisters, when we say all to Jesus it means much.”⁵¹

John G. Lake was a man who walked in signs and wonders. He strove to bring the fullness of God to every person.⁵² Much is written about his miracle ministry. Lake understood that outward manifestations were the result of a deep, intimate walk with God. While in Africa, he wrote, “I cannot tell you what wonderful manifestations of the Spirit

⁴⁷ Reidt, 25.

⁴⁸ Reidt, 25.

⁴⁹ Reidt, 25.

⁵⁰ Morgan, Kindle (Locations 119-122).

⁵¹ Morgan, Kindle (Locations 119-122).

⁵² Liardon, Kindle (Locations 54-55).

of God that we see every day in depth and character.”⁵³ He often said that the secret of heaven’s power was not “in the doing but in the being.”⁵⁴

John G. Lake Regarding Sanctification and Inner Healing

While John G. Lake is largely known for a ministry of healing and miracles, he did not believe that the healing power of God was only for physical illness. Lake viewed humans as a three part being (spirit, soul and body) and lived with the conviction that God’s will was for the restoration and healing of the whole man. He firmly believed “Sanctification is calculated to apply to the needs of all our nature, first to the spirit, second to the soul, third to the body.”⁵⁵ He understood the importance of renewing the mind and would often quote John Wesley stating, “Sanctification is possessing the mind of Christ, and all the mind of Christ.”⁵⁶ The result of sanctification was holiness. Lake believed that the “inflow of Holy Life into our body *must produce* holiness in the *body*, just as it does in the soul.”⁵⁷ Lake did not see this as merely a theoretical truth, but a vital reality. Fellowshipping with God and having encounters with God produced a permanent transformation. Like the mystics, Lake understood that time spent in the presence of God was the key to transformation and inner healing.

Lake lived with an understanding that it was God’s will to live in the fullness of divine life. Total consecration resulted in a person becoming “the utter expression of

⁵³ Blake, 41.

⁵⁴ Liardon, Kindle (Locations 55-56).

⁵⁵ Reidt, 21.

⁵⁶ Reidt, 21.

⁵⁷ Reidt, 21.

Jesus Christ to mankind.”⁵⁸ He was convinced that Christianity resulted in a believer possessing the life and nature of God. He believed, “The spirit of man and the Spirit of God are of one substance and one nature and his [man’s] mind and body take on the spiritual power imparted, until it, too, becomes Christ-like.”⁵⁹

The purpose of salvation was not just going to heaven, but transformation; Lake knew that the Christian life consisted of more than just dying and going to heaven. The Christian was to radiate the life and nature of God. The purpose of salvation was “to become a child of God with the character of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁰ It was God’s desire that sons and daughters of God would walk with God and manifest the nature of Jesus throughout their daily existence. Lake lived with the understanding that the role of believers was to “reveal the righteousness of God in this world.”⁶¹ Living in the power, the presence of God was the normal state of Christianity. This life of power was the natural byproduct of the life of God within the believer. Lake lived with the conviction that the power of the indwelling Spirit of God “could repel disease.”⁶² This place of union with God was the result of complete surrender to God. The Christian life was a life without compromise. Walking with God meant walking in all of God’s ways.⁶³

The life of John G. Lake was marked by miracles of healing and demonstrations of the Spirit of God. Yet despite that, he understood that the work of the Spirit of God in

⁵⁸ Lake, *Living In God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 2875-2876).

⁵⁹ Reidt, 30.

⁶⁰ Lake, *Living In God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 2933-2934).

⁶¹ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Location 1575).

⁶² Gordon Lindsay, ed., *John G. Lake Sermons on Dominion Over Demons, Disease and Death* (Dallas, TX: Christ for the Nations, 1983), 105.

⁶³ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 500-501).

a man's heart and soul was more important than outward manifestations. He would say that the biggest miracle at Pentecost was not "the outward demonstration of tongues."⁶⁴ Rather, it was the manifestation of the love of God in their hearts that caused them to be "moved by God into one family."⁶⁵

Lake viewed inner healing as a byproduct of sanctification and consecration. As a Methodist, he understood that sanctification was a second work of grace. However, unlike John Wesley, sanctification was not a one-time event but the starting point to a life of progressive holiness. Consecration was an ongoing work of the Spirit of God that was necessary to maintain the mind of Christ. A life of sustained consecration would help guard the Christian from sin. The response to "something offensive to the Spirit and the knowledge of God" was to "shut the doors of the nature against it, and it will not touch you."⁶⁶ Healing (both inner and physical healing) resulted from complete consecration on the part of the believer and resulted in a person becoming a "Christ-man."⁶⁷ He carried the conviction that "The surrender of the spirit to God is not all that He demands. God demands also the mind and the body."⁶⁸ Lake believed Christians could live in peace, in victory over sin provided they lived in complete consecration to God. The church's failure to recognize this fact kept people from experiencing inner healing. Like the mystics, Lake believed that inner healing came from understanding a believer's identity in Christ. He stated "The secret of Christianity is not in doing; the secret is in being. Real

⁶⁴ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Location 2820).

⁶⁵ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 2821-2822).

⁶⁶ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 594-595).

⁶⁷ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Location 492).

⁶⁸ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 509-511).

Christianity is in being a possessor of the nature of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁹ He realized that living in this new nature came from a renewed mind. Lake would comment, “Salvation from natural thoughts and ways . . . can come only through the natural mind being transformed into the mind of Christ.”⁷⁰

Lake had little tolerance for lukewarm Christianity, believing “a low standard of Christianity is responsible for all the shame and sin and wickedness in the world.”⁷¹ His conviction was that lack of consecration led to bondage in people’s lives. The Christian life required full and total dependence on God. This required a complete consecration of man’s spirit, soul, and body to God. Total consecration “cuts us forever plumb off from looking for help from the flesh, the world, or the devil.”⁷² That level of consecration was no less than the example set by Jesus in His earthly ministry. The standard of consecration for the Christian was “the fullness that Jesus consecrated Himself to the Father at the river Jordan.”⁷³ Struggles with sin were the result of a lack of consecration. Lake observed, “The things which possess the heart and which are unlike God fasten themselves because the inner being is not subject to the will of God.”⁷⁴ He felt that the

⁶⁹ Lake, *Living in God’s Power*, Kindle (Locations 495-496).

⁷⁰ Lake, *Living in God’s Power*, Kindle (Locations 527-528).

⁷¹ Lake, *Living in God’s Power*, Kindle (Locations 493-494).

⁷² John G. Lake, *John G. Lake on Healing* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2009), Kindle (Locations 72-74).

⁷³ Lake, *John G. Lake on Healing*, Kindle (Locations 155-156).

⁷⁴ Lake, *John G. Lake on Healing*, Kindle (Locations 502-503).

church “has not recognized the salvation of the mind from the power of sin,”⁷⁵ and that is why many say that “there is no such thing as sanctification.”⁷⁶

Lake firmly believed that it was possible for the Christian to possess a mind that was completely free from impure thoughts. He was firmly convinced that “An individual with all the mind of Christ cannot have a thought that is not a Christ-thought, no more than a spirit fully surrendered to God could have evil within it.”⁷⁷ Consecration was at the core of a victorious Christian life. Lake saw this complete commitment to God as the only way for believers to live as it “takes the individual forever out of the hands of all but God.”⁷⁸ This was “the real secret of the successful Christian life.”⁷⁹ At the same time, Lake realized that this lifestyle was progressive. Salvation was not just a one-time event, but a process that begins “when the spirit is surrendered to God.”⁸⁰

Lake firmly believed that Christians should live in a state of total consecration to God; this consecration was not something resulting from human effort, but the result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Lake learned that to attempt this by human effort was not only “weariness to the flesh,” but also impossible without the help of the Holy Spirit. He believed that when the consecrated life was lived in response to “the impulse of the Spirit of Christ,” that it would bring “joy to the soul.”⁸¹ Living by the leading of the Holy

⁷⁵ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 514-515).

⁷⁶ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 514-515).

⁷⁷ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 517-518).

⁷⁸ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Location 538).

⁷⁹ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 538-539).

⁸⁰ Lake, *Living in God's Power*, Kindle (Locations 505-506).

⁸¹ Lake, *Adventures in God*, 35.

Spirit was a key to his life of power with God. The purpose of the indwelling Holy Spirit was to “make you as a master.”⁸² It was the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer that would cleanse “the nature from the power and dominion of sin.”⁸³ Inner healing came from the dominion “Jesus Christ gives to the Christian soul.”⁸⁴ This dominion was the result of an ongoing fellowship with God. Lake would write, “There is a dominion in the soul of the real man of God who is in touch with heaven.”⁸⁵

Lake’s relationship with God led him to embrace his identity as a child of God. He observed “The victory of the Christ and the victory of a soul is in the knowledge of the relationship between your soul and the soul of Christ.”⁸⁶ This understanding of identity is key to modern inner healing methods. For example, Neil Anderson, one of the foremost Christian practitioners in the area of inner healing, has stated, “Your hope for growth, meaning and fulfillment as a Christian is based on understanding who you are — specifically your identity in Christ as a child of God.”⁸⁷ Lake’s self-image was firmly founded on who he was in Christ. Lake’s boldness was in knowing that the God of the universe dwelt within him. He had utmost confidence in the Spirit of God who lived in him. He lived with the conviction that the Spirit of God in the life of the believer “was to be as powerful as the Holy Ghost was in the Christ.”⁸⁸ Roberts Liardon notes that Lake

⁸² Reidt, 39.

⁸³ Reidt, 22.

⁸⁴ Lake, *Adventures in God*, 38.

⁸⁵ Lake, *Adventures in God*, 38.

⁸⁶ Reidt, 31.

⁸⁷ Anderson, *Victory Over the Darkness*, 9.

⁸⁸ Reidt, 40.

believed “Spirit-filled Christians should enjoy the same type of ministry Jesus did while living on earth, and that this reality could be accomplished only by seeing themselves as God saw them.”⁸⁹

Lake would often remind himself that the God of the universe dwelled within him. In the morning he would get dressed and put on his suit. He would then look in the mirror and recite, “God lives in that man in that suit of clothes. And where that suit of clothes goes, God goes.”⁹⁰ Lake lived his life fully for God, completely secure that God was always with Him. That assurance caused him to go through life victorious over sin, sickness and the devil. He lived his life firmly convinced “The man with Christ in him — with the Holy Ghost — is greater than any other power in the world.”⁹¹

Sozo Inner Healing Ministry

The latter part of the twentieth century saw the development of ministries dedicated to inner healing. Among these ministries is *Sozo*, developed at Bethel Church, Redding, California in 1997. The premise behind *Sozo* is that “emotional wounds from the past create false beliefs about ourselves relationships with others.”⁹² These wounds hinder one’s relationship with the Godhead. *Sozo* is a tool that “addresses the tripartite”⁹³

⁸⁹ Liardon, 56-57.

⁹⁰ “Faith,” *The Cry of the Heart*, accessed October 21, 2013, <http://heart-cry.com/devotionals/faith/>.

⁹¹ Lake, *Living In God's Power*, Kindle (Location 581).

⁹² Nagib, 25.

⁹³ Dr. Nagib is using tripartite interchangeably with triune. Lake believed in a triune God and a triune nature of man.

nature allowing God to do the work.”⁹⁴ This is consistent with Lake’s views that restoration requires sanctification to be applied to the spirit, soul and body. *Sozo* differs from counseling in that during a *Sozo* session, the person receiving the *Sozo* (the client) is led to hear from each member of the Godhead. Through this encounter, lies are uncovered and the client hears from the Godhead regarding his/her true identity. The client is led to repent of any areas of sin or unforgiveness that may arise during the *Sozo* session.

One of *Sozo*’s major benefits is that it brings the client into a greater level of intimacy with God. This newfound intimacy is one reason that the breakthroughs experienced during *Sozo* are lasting. John G. Lake spoke about the importance of recognizing God’s voice and having communion with God.⁹⁵ Through *Sozo*, individuals who previously have never experienced hearing God learn to recognize His voice. Dawna DeSilva, *Sozo*’s co-founder, observes this “healed connection with Father, Son and Holy Spirit,”⁹⁶ is what enables people to “walk in the destiny to which you have been called.”⁹⁷ The *Sozo* experience creates an environment where the client can more readily encounter God resulting in a greater understanding of God’s love for him/her, and a better understanding of his/her identity in Him; through this understanding, the mind is renewed. While the *Sozo* ministry is less than twenty years old, its effectiveness is rooted in inner healing concepts that have been employed throughout church history.

⁹⁴ Nagib, 41.

⁹⁵ Lake, *Adventures in God*, 4.

⁹⁶ Nagib, 73.

⁹⁷ Nagib, 73.

Analysis and Conclusion

Inner healing, or healing of the soul, has been a focal point of the church since the first century. The church fathers, the mystics, and the proponents of the Higher Life Movement all understood the importance of the healing of the inner person. While the methods vary, the goal of bringing “healing to the brokenhearted” (Lk 4:18) has not changed.

The specific focus of this discussion has been the ministry of John G. Lake. The fruit of John G. Lake’s ministry testifies to the effectiveness of his life and what he believed. In his lifetime he was responsible for the planting of hundreds of churches in Africa. When he returned to America, he opened up healing rooms in Spokane, Washington, and saw thousands healed and saved. His writings continue to bless and inspire many to this day.

Clearly, sanctification and consecration are necessary for a healthy Christian life. His deep fellowship with God led him to understand and live from his identity in Christ. This is a cornerstone of modern inner healing ministry. In the words of Neil Anderson, in order for healing to take place “it is important to recognize faulty beliefs from the past, to renounce them as lies, and to reprogram and renew our minds with truth.”⁹⁸

Is Lake’s lifestyle an adequate model for inner healing? Lake’s view of healing was that the life of God in the believer was to produce healing in a person’s spirit, soul, and body. This was the result of an ongoing lifestyle of sanctification and consecration to God. Through this process, Lake entered into an intimacy with God where he came to understand and embrace his identity as a child of God. These elements of sanctification,

⁹⁸ Anderson, *Who I Am in Christ*, 7.

consecration, and identity are at the core of many modern inner healing models including *Sozo*. By his own admission, Lake carried an anointing from God “seldom manifested in modern life.”⁹⁹ His encounters with God were unusually dramatic. While his devotion to God is something to which the church can aspire, it cannot be considered typical. Modern inner healing ministries are important as they assist individuals in achieving intimacy with God.

Modern inner healing models are designed to help people encounter the love of God and receive healing. People often carry wounds from years of abuse or other trauma. Modern inner healing ministry typically involves a facilitator helping the individual identify root issues with the help of the Holy Spirit. In my own experience, I have seen people set free from wounds they had carried for years, unable to identify the cause on their own. However, through the practice of inner healing, the individual is empowered to connect with the Holy Spirit, renounce lies and embrace his/her identity, resulting in freedom. None of this is to discredit the ministry of people like John G. Lake. Knowledge is progressive. As Isaac Newton said, “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” Modern inner healing ministries build on Lake’s understanding of sanctification and identity to bring freedom to many.

⁹⁹ John G. Lake, *The Collected Works of John G. Lake* (n.p.: Jawbone Digital, 2013), Kindle (Location 5146).

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION – THE TRINITY

Theological Introduction

One of the major themes in Scripture is freedom (Luke 4:18, Jn 8:36). Jesus came to set people free - spirit, soul and body; this includes freedom from sin, sickness and emotional bondages. The specific focus of this thesis is the evaluation of the effectiveness of the *Sozo* inner healing model within the context of a local church. During a *Sozo* session the person receiving the *Sozo* (the client) encounters God in a personal way. A key part of *Sozo* involves the client interacting with all three members of the Trinity both individually and corporately. *Sozo* is effective because God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are all intimately involved with the client being set free. The doctrine of the Trinity is at the heart of the *Sozo* model.

The Doctrine of the Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most amazing and important, yet controversial doctrines in Christianity. Islam and Judaism (particularly Rabbinic Judaism) both reveal God as one substance, one person. Polytheistic religions believe in many gods. Christianity, however, reveals one God, one substance, in three persons. Through an understanding of the Trinity one obtains a greater understanding of who God is and how

He interacts with His creation, which would otherwise be possible. As Bourgeault has stated, “The fact that these persons actually exist—and that they are the three unique manifestations of the unseen fullness of God—comprises the theological cornerstone of Christian experience.”¹

The Trinity unveils a God who desires to be known. “Illingworth argues that the doctrine of the Trinity arises from the Christian insight that God is personal,”² he is not an impersonal force. God is someone who desires to be known and to interact with humankind. Erickson comments “He is an individual being, with self-consciousness and will, capable of feeling, choosing, and having a reciprocal relationship with other personal and social beings.”³ Key to His personhood is the fact that He reveals Himself to us not just as God, but also as our Father. By revealing Himself as Father, He demonstrates His desire to watch over us, to care for us. Erickson further observes, “Because God is a person (indeed, He is pictured as our Father), our relationship with Him has a dimension of warmth and understanding.”⁴ Christianity is not a religion where we study God from afar; it is an intimate, loving relationship with the Creator of the universe. McGrath observes, “The basic Christian assertion that God is personal, which is deeply grounded both in the biblical witness to God and the Christian experience of God in prayer and worship, is thus implicitly Trinitarian.”⁵ It is through our interaction with

¹ Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Holy Trinity and the Law of Three: Discovering the Radical Truth at the Heart of Christianity* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2013), Kindle (Locations 348-350).

² Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction*, 5th ed. (New York, NY: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 236.

³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3 ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 240.

⁴ Erickson, 241.

⁵ McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction*, 236.

the Trinity that we get to experience God on a personal level. Each member of the Trinity adds to a believer's rich experience with God. The fullness of the Christian life can only be experienced through a relationship with the Trinity.

The mystery of the Trinity is not an indication of God's desire to be hidden. Gunton observes, "If the real God is known as one, the tacking on of his threeness simply appears as an unnecessary complication of the simple belief in God."⁶ This would be true if God desired to be known superficially. However, His desire to be known on an intimate level requires that He reveal Himself more fully. McGrath explains, "Rather, it is a result of the fact that He is infinite and therefore He cannot be fully understood by our finite minds. As Augustine has said, "*Si comprehendis non est Deus*. If you can get your mind around it, it cannot be God."⁷

Acknowledging that God is bigger than one's ability to comprehend Him is not a bad thing. "The Trinity reminds us that our highest reasoning powers and most profound logical categories will never penetrate or fully comprehend, explain or contain, resolve or remove the mystery of God."⁸ Despite that, it is important to realize that God is a personal God and as such He desires to reveal Himself. While we know in part (1 Co 13:8) there remains a responsibility to live based on the revelation one has received from Him. The Trinity is not to be viewed as some cloaking device designed to hide the nature of God. Moltmann recognizes that the Trinity does not point "to some impenetrable

⁶ Colin E. Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2003), 3.

⁷ McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction*, 235.

⁸ Stephen Seamands, *Ministry in the Image of God: the Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2005), Kindle (Location 973).

obscurity or insoluble riddle.”⁹ God does not reveal Himself in a Trinitarian manner to confuse, but rather to provide a richer insight into His nature. Moltmann comments that an understanding of the Trinity “means with unveiled face already recognizing here and now, in the obscurity of history, the glory of the triune God and praising Him in the hope of one day seeing Him face to face.”¹⁰ The church’s current Trinitarian revelation of God, incomplete as it is, creates a longing for the day when believers see Him in the fullness of who He is.

Why does God reveal Himself to people? He reveals Himself so that men and women may know Him. Apart from a revelation of God, humanity would be left with speculation, rather than understanding. Fellowship is impossible without relationship, and the Almighty desires fellowship with men and women who have been made in His image. Grudem asserts, “If we are to know God at all, it is necessary that He reveal himself to us.”¹¹ Salvation is based on knowing God (Jn 17:3), not simply knowing about Him. Karl Barth observed, “Knowledge of God is always redemptive or salvific in nature.”¹² As Erickson has said, God reveals “those dimensions of himself that are particularly significant for faith.”¹³ Truth is therefore “personal, not propositional.”¹⁴ This is key. The members of the Trinity desire to be known personally, not just conceptually. It is “God

⁹ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), Kindle (Locations 2361-2363).

¹⁰ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Locations 2361-2363).

¹¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 149.

¹² Erickson, 134.

¹³ Erickson, 146.

¹⁴ Erickson, 152.

himself whom we know, not simply facts about him or actions he does.”¹⁵ The Bible reveals a God who desires to dwell with and walk among men and women.

As finite human beings, one’s understanding of God is at best incomplete and imprecise. This does not detract from the understanding that has been received. As Grudem has stated, “God’s incomprehensibility has much positive application for our own lives. It means that we will never be able to know ‘too much’ about God, for we will never run out of things to learn about him, and we will thus never tire in delighting in the discovery of more and more of his excellence and of the greatness of his works.”¹⁶ In Exodus, God identifies himself as “I AM,” “demonstrating that, he is not an abstract, unknowable being or a nameless force,”¹⁷ but a personal being. As such, He relates to man on a personal level with “warmth and understanding.”¹⁸ This is in opposition to Philo’s classic view of the impassibility of God, meaning a God without emotions.¹⁹ That is not to say that understanding the Trinity is a simple process. How can one God exist in three different persons? The seemingly counter-intuitive nature of the Trinity has given rise to speculations and differing opinions, as well as heresies. Tritheism views the Trinity as three independent beings. Modalism attempted to explain God as one person who reveals Himself in three ways. However, as Karl Rahner has explained, “the revelation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is the way He actually is.”²⁰

¹⁵ Grudem, 151-152.

¹⁶ Grudem, 150.

¹⁷ Erickson, 240.

¹⁸ Erickson, 241.

¹⁹ McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction*, 204.

²⁰ McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction*, 254.

The most logical place to begin a study on the Trinity is the Bible. McGrath observes, “Scripture bears witness to a God who demands to be understood in a Trinitarian manner.”²¹ The primary source of biblical support for the Trinity is in the New Testament writings. As Geisler states, “The Old Testament revealed only hints of the Trinity taught in the New Testament.”²² While the doctrine of the Trinity is more fully developed in the New Testament, it is introduced as early as the first chapter of Genesis. Moltmann states “creation is seen as ‘the work’ of the Father, atonement as ‘the work’ of the Son, and sanctification as ‘the work’ of the Spirit.”²³ That is not to say that creation is solely an act of Father God. The creation account in Genesis does ascribe creation to God. However, verse two tells us that “the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters” (Gn 1:2). In verse three, God spoke creation into existence. This reference to His speaking gives insight that the Word, the *Logos*, was involved in creation. This is confirmed in the first chapter of John, which states, “All things came into being through Him [the Word], and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being” (Jn 1:3). The fact that all three members of the Trinity are involved is consistent with the doctrine of appropriation that “every person of the Trinity is involved in every outward action of the Godhead.”²⁴

Further insight into the Trinity is provided in Genesis 1:26, the creation of man. “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . . ” (Gn

²¹ McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction*, 254.

²² Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 608.

²³ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Locations 1476-1478).

²⁴ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 241.

1:26). The Hebrew word for God in verse 26 is *Elohim*, which is a plural form of *El*, one of the Hebrew words for God. It is true that the traditional Jewish understanding of God is not Trinitarian. Jewish commentators have generally held that the plural is used because God is addressing his heavenly court, i.e., the angels.²⁵ That view does not eliminate the possibility that this is in fact a reference to the Trinity. As Grudem states, “We are not told how many persons, and we have nothing approaching a complete doctrine of the Trinity, but it is implied that more than one person is involved.”²⁶ God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are involved with His creation throughout all of human history. Gunton comments that both Tertullian and Iranaeus “have a conception of Trinitarian divine action in which the incarnation and its Old Testament anticipations mutually reinforce each other.”²⁷

The “one-ness” of God is clearly stated in what is commonly called the *Shema*. “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one” (Dt 6:4). The word for “one” is the same Hebrew word used in Genesis 2:24 where God declares that man and woman will be one flesh. As Erickson points out, “It seems that something is being affirmed here about the nature of God—he is an organism, that is, a unity of distinct parts.”²⁸

While the Old Testament introduces the concept of the Trinity in a veiled manner, the revelation of the Trinity is more fully developed in the New Testament. As previously stated, the fact that God is the Creator has been established in Genesis 1:26. Jesus,

²⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word 1998), 27.

²⁶ Grudem, 227.

²⁷ Gunton, 36.

²⁸ Erickson, 299.

however, reveals God in relational terms by referring to Him as Father. Erickson explains, “It is apparent that, for Jesus, ‘God’ and ‘your heavenly Father’ are interchangeable expressions; and in numerous other references to God, Jesus obviously has the Father in mind (e.g., Matt. 19: 23– 26; 27: 46; Mark 12: 17, 24– 27).”²⁹ Jesus speaks of His dependence on the Father when He says “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (Jn 5:19). It is therefore evident that Jesus has subordinated Himself to God the Father.

The divinity of Jesus is expressed in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. “In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word (*Logos*) was with God, and the Word was God” (Jn 1:1). This is a clear reference to Jesus, and therefore establishes His divinity. The deity of Jesus as the Son is further illustrated when He is baptized in the Jordan River. As He was coming out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended on Him and a voice from heaven declared, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (Mk 1:11). Seamands observes, “Thus the Father confirmed Jesus as his Son and chosen servant (echoing messianic titles found in Psalm 2:8 and Isaiah 42:1).”³⁰

Philippians 2 provides additional support that Jesus is divine. Here, the Apostle Paul, speaking of Jesus’ earthly ministry, says “who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped” (Phil 2:7). This verse gives us insight into the nature of Jesus, being fully God and fully man. The word here often translated “form” is *μορφή* (*morpheē*). “This term in classical Greek as well as in biblical

²⁹ Erickson, 295

³⁰ Seamands, Kindle (Locations 571-574).

Greek means ‘the set of characteristics that constitutes a thing what it is.’ It denotes the genuine nature of a thing.”³¹ Erickson further clarifies this by saying “Equality with God is something he antecedently possessed. And one who is equal with God must be God.”³² Furthermore, Jesus claimed to have the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:8-10), an authority that is reserved for God. In John, Thomas addresses him by saying, “My Lord and my God!” (Jn 20:28). Jesus hears this and does nothing to correct Thomas, indicating that He concurs with Thomas’ statement.

Despite the biblical support for His divinity, much of the controversy concerning the Trinity centers on the nature of Jesus Christ. Was He God, man, or both? Was He a created being? God coming and dying for mankind is a difficult concept to grasp. If He was a man, then how could He die for mankind’s sins? Tertullian believed that all three members of the Trinity were of the same substance, in three persons. Docetism asserted that Jesus was divine but that, “his humanity was merely an appearance.”³³ The controversy over the nature of Jesus reached a peak early in the fourth century. Alexander, who was the bishop of Alexandria, believed that Jesus was co-eternal with God. Arius, on the other hand, believed that Jesus, the *Logos*, was a created being. Emperor Constantine, in an attempt to bring unity, convened a council at Nicea in 325 to decide the issue. The result of the council was the development of the Nicene Creed, which “is widely regarded as the basis of Orthodox Christianity.”³⁴

³¹ Erickson, 295.

³² Erickson, 296.

³³ McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction*, 273.

³⁴ Alister E. McGrath, ed., *The Christian Theology Reader*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 9.

The creed clearly establishes that the Son, the *Logos*, was co-equal, co-eternal with God, and not a created being. He was begotten, not created, “God From God.” This is in direct opposition to the Arian view. The creed makes its theological viewpoint explicit, condemning all who believe that Son came from “another substance,”³⁵ “came from nothing,”³⁶ or that “there was a time when He was not.”³⁷ The divinity of Christ as the second person of the Trinity is clearly and explicitly communicated in the Creed. The Son is a distinct being from the Father, the one who became flesh for salvation. While the Nicene Creed did not end all the controversy, it established the Orthodox view that prevails to this day.

The third person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. Erickson points out, “The deity of the Holy Spirit is not as easily established as is the deity of the Father and the Son.”³⁸ Much of this is because the nature of the Holy Spirit is not as explicitly defined as either the Father or the Son. To some, the Holy Spirit is not a person but a force. Scripture, however, reveals the Holy Spirit as a person. Jesus says to “baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). This indicates that all three members are in relation to one another. Jesus’ statement puts the Holy Spirit on the same level as the Father and the Son. The Apostle Paul uses the terms “Spirit,” “Lord,” and “God” interchangeably (1 Cor 12:4-6). Paul writes, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor 3:16), indicating that the Spirit of God that dwells in believers is in fact God. He goes on to say “Now the Lord is the Spirit,

³⁵ Quoted from the Nicene Creed.

³⁶ Quoted from the Nicene Creed.

³⁷ Quoted from the Nicene Creed.

³⁸ Erickson, 782.

and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor 3:17). The phrase “the Lord is the Spirit” clearly identifies the Holy Spirit as God. Grudem observes that the expression “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19) helps to establish the Holy Spirit as God, “because they show that the Holy Spirit is classified on an equal level with the Father and the Son.”³⁹ The eternity of the Holy Spirit is further proof of His deity. In Hebrews 9:14, the Holy Spirit is called the “eternal spirit,” signifying that He is not a created being. Erickson concludes, “Only God, however, is eternal (Heb. 1: 10– 12), all creatures being temporal. So the Holy Spirit must be God.”⁴⁰

Erickson observes that the Holy Spirit “is the point at which the Trinity becomes personal to the believer.”⁴¹ As such, it is important for the believer to understand His personality. In a letter to the church at Antioch, the apostles comment: “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit.” This shows that pleasure of the Holy Spirit can be sensed. The Bible warns against “quenching the Spirit” (1 Th 5:19). The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Eph 4:30). These Scriptures demonstrate that believers can encounter the Holy Spirit on a very intimate level and that He responds to us, both positively and negatively.

The Holy Spirit “helps us in our weaknesses.” He “intercedes for us with deep groanings” (Rom 8:26). At Antioch, He instructed the church to “set apart Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 13:2). Saul and Barnabas obey and are “sent out by the Holy Spirit.” What is clear here is that the Holy Spirit plays a central role in directing the activities of the Church. He is not a passive bystander, but an active participant in communicating divine

³⁹ Grudem, 242.

⁴⁰ Erickson, 783.

⁴¹ Erickson, 772.

strategies to the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit does not only lead the body of Christ, He also empowers. He is the dispenser of supernatural gifts (1 Co 12). Part of His ministry is to lead people into truth (Jn 16:13). This is not simply intellectual knowledge, but a revelation of the Church's inheritance in Christ (Eph 1:17-19).

Having established the reality of the Trinity, it is important to understand their natures. What are their roles? How do they interact with each other and with mankind? Two terms, “*perichoresis*” and “appropriation,” serve to help in understanding how they operate individually and corporately. *Perichoresis* is a term that means mutual interpenetration. “The concept of *perichoresis* allows the individuality of the persons to be maintained, while insisting that each person shares in the life of the other two.”⁴² Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all of the same substance and operate in perfect unity with each other. It is “through the concept of *perichoresis*, all subordinationism in the doctrine of the Trinity is avoided.”⁴³ Lewis observes, “each has personal capacities of intellect, emotion, and will, essential characteristics of persons.”⁴⁴

Appropriation is the complement to *perichoresis*. While *perichoresis* ensures that the individuality of the Trinity is maintained, appropriation balances that with a corporate unity. McGrath explains that the doctrine of appropriation clarifies that “every person of the Trinity is involved in every outward action of the Godhead. Thus Father, Son, and Spirit are all involved in the work of creation, which is not to be viewed as the work of

⁴² McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 241.

⁴³ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Location 2560).

⁴⁴ Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), Kindle (Locations 6806-6807).

the Father alone.”⁴⁵ Elements of this are evident in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (Jn 5:19). Jesus never acted independently of His Father. This is further illustrated when Jesus says, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). Jesus is not saying that He and the Father are the same person. Rather, He is establishing the perfect harmony that exists within the three members of the Trinity. He further clarifies this by saying, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works” (Jn 14:10).

The doctrines of *perichoresis* and appropriation are evident regarding the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you” (Jn 14:16). The Greek word for another is *allos*, meaning another of the same kind. So while the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son, He is of the same kind or substance as the Father and the Son.

From whom does the Holy Spirit proceed? Originally it was believed that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father. This is what John 14:16 appears to say. In verse 26, Jesus says “the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name” (Jn 14:26), giving further credence to the belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. This is

⁴⁵ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 241.

the view expressed in the Nicene Creed. However, John 16 provides a different perspective. Here, Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit when He says, “I will send Him to you” (Jn 16:7), indicating that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son. The question of the procession of the Holy Spirit was at the heart of the *filioque* debate. *Filioque* is a Latin word meaning “and from the Son.”⁴⁶ Eventually, the Western church concluded that the Holy Spirit proceeded from both the Father and the Son. This preserves the relation between the Son and the Holy Spirit while also preserving the role of the Father as the source of divine life. As Seamands notes, “Though never separate from one another, the Trinitarian persons are nevertheless distinct from one another. They never blend or merge or are subsumed by one another.”⁴⁷

Each member of the Trinity participates with the other two in the activity of divine life. The fact that God is “Father” and Jesus is the “Son” indicates a familial relationship. It is common for believers to think about the love they have for God and God has for them; what is not as common a thought is that the members of the Godhead share this love with each other. Grudem clarifies, “This eternal love of the Father for the Son, the Son for the Father, and of both for the Holy Spirit makes heaven a world of love and joy because each person of the Trinity seeks to bring joy and happiness to the other two.”⁴⁸ In John it can be observed that Jesus was “sent by the Father” (Jn 14:24). The Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (Jn 14:16, 15:26). The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus (Jn 15:26), and glorifies Him (Jn 16:14). This is consistent with the positions of Augustine and Calvin who believed that “the actions of any one of the

⁴⁶ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 247.

⁴⁷ Seamands, Kindle (Location 293).

⁴⁸ Seamands, Kindle (Location 293).

persons of the Trinity are actually actions in which all three persons participate.”⁴⁹

Nowhere does one observe any member of the Trinity acting independently of the other two. “The three Persons are independent in that they are divine, but as Persons they are deeply bound to one another and dependent on one another.”⁵⁰

While all three are in perfect unity, that should not obscure the fact that they do share different roles. As Ellen Wondra states, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit “are not simply ways in which God is revealed or ways in which we experience God, but rather essential or immanent distinctions in the Godhead.”⁵¹ All three members of the Trinity share the same attributes. However, they differ in “the way they relate to each other and to the creation.”⁵² Grudem summarizes the role of the Father in creation and redemption as directing and sending the Son and Holy Spirit.”⁵³ The text indicates that it was the Father who “sent the Son” (Jn 3:17).

In what way is God actually the Father? Seamands believes that “The Father is identified as Father only by virtue of his relationship to the Son, and vice versa.”⁵⁴ While God is truly the Father of Jesus, if that were the only way in which He manifested His Fatherhood, believers would be left as orphans. Thus, while He is the Father to Jesus, He is also the Father to believers. The Lord’s Prayer starts with the phrase, “Our Father” (Mt 6:9), revealing God as a Father to believers. In Ephesians, Paul prays “For this reason I

⁴⁹ Erickson, 308.

⁵⁰ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Locations 2511-2512).

⁵¹ Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology, 3rd Edition*, (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), Kindle (Locations 1706-1707).

⁵² Grudem, 254.

⁵³ Grudem, 249.

⁵⁴ Seamands, Kindle (Location 288).

bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name” (Eph 3:14). The revelation of God as Father is vital to bringing people to a place of intimacy with God and well-being in their own lives.

The role of the Son is clearly evident in the economy of salvation. Jesus is called the Savior throughout the New Testament (Lk 2:11). According to Wondra, “The Son's only mission is to act in complete accord and conformity with the Father (that is, in obedience) and, thus, to reveal the Father.”⁵⁵ When Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father, He responds by saying, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9). Jesus’ earthly ministry is not just a revealing of who He is as Savior; it is a clear exposition of the nature of the Father. In His earthly ministry, Jesus reveals God as Father. It is in His role as Savior that Jesus reconciles humanity to the Father. Erickson summarizes the ministry of Jesus by saying “it is important to retain the truths that Jesus reveals God to humanity, reconciles God and humanity to one another, and rules and will rule over the whole of the creation, including humanity.”⁵⁶

Jesus speaks of the coming ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John. He reveals the Holy Spirit’s role as the one who will dwell within the believer (Jn 14:17). It is the Holy Spirit who will function as teacher (Jn 14:26). He will “convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment” (Jn 14:8). He will lead and guide the believer into truth and will glorify the risen Savior” (Jn 16:13,14). After His resurrection, Jesus tells his believers to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as it is the Holy Spirit who will empower the church (Acts 1:4,1:8).

⁵⁵ Wondra, Kindle (Locations 1383-1384).

⁵⁶ Erickson, 697.

It is the Holy Spirit who dwells within the believer (1 Cor 6:19). He is actively involved in the life of the individual believer and the church. Erickson explains, “It is primarily through the Holy Spirit’s work that we feel God’s presence within, and the Christian life is given a special tangibility.”⁵⁷ It is the Holy Spirit who reveals to believers the deep things of God (1 Cor 2:10). The Holy Spirit is the one who empowers the Church, distributing supernatural gifts throughout the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:4-11). The Holy Spirit “is the particular person of the Trinity through whom the entire Triune Godhead currently works in us.”⁵⁸ Moltmann observes, “By renewing men and women, by bringing about their new solidarity and fellowship, and by delivering the body from death, the Holy Spirit glorifies the risen Lord and, through him, the Father.”⁵⁹ He goes on to state, “The experience of the Spirit is therefore the experience of the Shekinah, the divine indwelling.”⁶⁰ Through the Holy Spirit, members of His body experience the reality of God in the believer, on the believer, and with the believer. God is no longer solely the Father in Heaven. He is now also the believer’s constant companion, guide, and helper. The Holy Spirit is also the unifying agent of the Godhead. Moltmann calls him “the unifying God.”⁶¹ The Bible instructs to be “diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3). It is through the Holy Spirit that “the song of praise and the unity proceed from the Spirit through the Son to the Father.”⁶²

⁵⁷ Erickson, 773.

⁵⁸ Erickson, 772-773.

⁵⁹ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Locations 1875-1876).

⁶⁰ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Locations 1572-1574).

⁶¹ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Location 1882).

⁶² Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Locations 1891-1893).

The Trinity and Inner Healing

The doctrine of the Trinity is critical to the *Sozo* inner healing model. The name *Sozo* is taken from the Greek word, which means saved, healed, delivered and made whole. The *Sozo* ministry aims “to get to the root of things hindering [one’s] personal connection with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”⁶³ During a *Sozo* session, the person receiving ministry (the client) is led to hear from God concerning lies, hurts, and bondages in his/her life. Once the lies are exposed, the client is led through prayer, releasing those bondages. The client is then guided to hear from God concerning their true identity. The client leaves the session having the previous lies replaced by the truth of how God sees him/her. By replacing the hurts and lies that developed in one’s earthly relationships with the truth, healing takes place and intimacy with the Trinity is realized.

One of the main tools used in a *Sozo* session is the Father Ladder. The Father Ladder is a tool that examines the connection between how someone views their earthly relationships, and their relationship with each member of the Trinity. The rationale for this tool is that there is a strong correlation between our earthly relationships and our relationship with God. The *Sozo* Training Manual explains, “When our family members do not understand, or are unable to fulfill their roles in our lives, we have a misunderstood view of Father God, Jesus and Holy Spirit.”⁶⁴ Individuals who have a difficult time experiencing intimacy with Father God typically have root issues stemming from hurts or wounds in their relationship with their earthly father. These wounds often

⁶³ What is Sozo?” Bethel Sozo, accessed May 12, 2013, <http://www.bethelsozo.com>.

⁶⁴ DeSilva and Liebscher, 38.

affect one's identity, self-esteem, sense of protection and provision. By uncovering the hurts and lies that developed in one's relationship with their earthly father, healing becomes possible and intimacy with the Father God is realized.

In similar fashion, individuals who are hindered in the relationship with the Holy Spirit usually have experienced issues in their relationship with their earthly mother. It is the role of the mother to meet the needs of comfort and teaching.⁶⁵ This corresponds to the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit is called the comforter (Jn 14:16 KJV). The Greek word used here is the word *parakletos*. It means "called to one's side, . . . and suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid."⁶⁶ Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would "teach us all things" (Jn 14:26). When one's earthly mother fails to meet a person's needs in relation to comfort and teaching, intimacy with the Holy Spirit is hindered. Within earthly relationships, "it is our siblings and friends who meet our needs for companionship and communication."⁶⁷ Dr. Margaret Nagib observes these relationships "play a significant role in how we see Jesus."⁶⁸ When these earthly relationships are not met, one's relationship with Jesus is hindered.

Is *Sozo*'s correlation between the Trinity and relationships on earth valid? Experience has demonstrated that people relate to their Heavenly Father based on their relationship with their earthly Father. In the Gospels, Jesus clearly announces that His followers are friends (Jn 15:15). Catherine LaCugna observes that Jesus not only "sought

⁶⁵ DeSilva and Liebscher, 33.

⁶⁶ W E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words: With Topical Index* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), Kindle (Locations 24657-24658).

⁶⁷ DeSilva and Liebscher, 33.

⁶⁸ Nagib, 79.

friendship and companionship,” He also “found it among the brokenhearted and misfits, the unhealthy and sinners.”⁶⁹ The Pharisees observed that Jesus related to others as a friend by calling Him a “friend of sinners” (Mt 11:19). It is therefore reasonable to view aspects of one’s relationship with Him as that of elder brother and friend.

In a similar way there is a correlation between one’s relationship with the Holy Spirit and one’s earthly mother. God does “care for Israel as a mother cares for her child (Isaiah 66: 13).”⁷⁰ The English mystic, Julian of Norwich, wrote, “God rejoices to be our Father, also that he rejoices to be our Mother.”⁷¹ Moltmann makes the connection between this aspect of God’s nature and the Holy Spirit when he says, “If believers are ‘born’ again from the Holy Spirit, then the Spirit is ‘the mother’ of God’s children and can in this sense also be termed a ‘feminine’ Spirit.”⁷²

Sozo is effective because of the intense love that God has for mankind. God is personal. Erickson remarks, “He is an individual being, with self-consciousness and will, capable of feeling, choosing, and having a reciprocal relationship with other personal and social beings.”⁷³ Seamands makes the point that “self-giving is at the heart of God and all creaturely being.”⁷⁴ God expresses His love for humanity because He is love (1 Jn 4:8). The Trinity loves each human being with the same love each member has for the other.

⁶⁹ Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 295.

⁷⁰ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 197.

⁷¹ Alister E. McGrath, ed., *The Christian Theology Reader*, 4th ed., 182.

⁷² Jurgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), Kindle (Locations 2231-2232).

⁷³ Erickson, 240.

⁷⁴ Seamands, Kindle (Location 773).

Sozo's foundation is an understanding that the Godhead is relational, not just with each other, but with believers. Each member of the Trinity interacts with the client during a *Sozo* session. As a result of this, the client is brought into a new level of intimacy with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit both individually and corporately. It is the Trinity's willingness to be engaged in the healing process on a deep, personal level that makes *Sozo* so effective. When the wounds and lies are repaired, "we directly impact our relationship with the Divine."⁷⁵ Through *Sozo*, the intimacy that the Trinity desires to have with believers is restored.

Seamands stresses the importance of relating to God in a Trinitarian manner when He comments, "the more you learn to 'think Trinity' and live out these characteristics, the richer and more fruitful your ministry will become, since it will conform to the Trinitarian image of God."⁷⁶ The fruit of a *Sozo* session is a greater intimacy with the Trinity. Without this relationship with the Trinity, true healing will not take place. In the words of Jurgen Moltmann, "People no longer need God in order to explain the world, but they do need him in order to exist with self-confidence, with self-certainty and with self-respect."⁷⁷

Conclusion

McGrath concludes, "The doctrine of the Trinity, properly understood, is the affirmation of God's intimate communion with us through Jesus Christ and the Holy

⁷⁵ Nagib, 79.

⁷⁶ Seamands, Kindle (Locations 140-141).

⁷⁷ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Locations 336-337).

Spirit.”⁷⁸ The Trinity provides an understanding of who God is, how He acts, and how He cares for us. Through the Trinity, believers are brought into an intimate relationship with an infinite God.

Grudem correctly reflects on the heart of the Trinity in stating, “It should cause us great joy to know that it is the purpose of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to give of themselves to us to bring us true joy and happiness.”⁷⁹ He invites us to fellowship with Him. As Moltmann summarizes, “To know God means to participate in the fullness of the divine life.”⁸⁰ It is through fellowship with the Trinity that healing takes place. When believers experience intimacy with the Trinity, wholeness is the outcome.

⁷⁸ McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 260.

⁷⁹ Grudem, 199.

⁸⁰ Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Kindle (Locations 2236-2237).

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Theoretical Introduction

The United States Declaration of Independence starts with, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”¹ Clearly happiness, including emotional well-being, is a goal for most people. Despite this goal, many people live with emotional turmoil; the freedom and joy they seek seems to elude them.

Inner healing ministries exist to help free individuals from the wounds and pain from which they have suffered. The latter part of the twentieth century has seen an emergence of new, formalized inner healing models. The goal of many inner healing ministries can be found in Luke 4:18, where Jesus states that He came to “proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed.” This includes the *Sozo* inner healing model that is the focus of this thesis. The premise behind *Sozo* is that “emotional wounds from the past create false beliefs about ourselves and our relationships with others. In turn, these false beliefs create blocks

¹ Declaration of Independence, US History.org, [http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/United States Declaration of Independence](http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/United%20States%20Declaration%20of%20Independence). (Accessed April 16, 2014).

in our relationship with the Godhead.”² *Sozo* is designed to bring about inner healing through a direct encounter with the Trinity. As the *Sozo* client hears God speak to him/her, false beliefs and wounds are exposed. As the person continues to hear God reveal the truth of who he/she is, healing occurs.

Sozo is not the only approach to inner healing, however. Other ministries attempt to help the client achieve inner healing through a variety of methods. Formal inner healing ministries are not the only practitioners of emotional and inner healing. Psychology, coupled with psychotherapy, is a field designed to help individuals address and overcome emotional and mental issues in their lives. This Theoretical Foundation chapter will review several of the current methods available today that are designed to address inner healing issues. This study will address different Christian inner healing models, and will also evaluate Christian counseling and Christian psychology. Secular methods will also be reviewed to help understand the differences between the Christian and secular approaches to inner healing.

Review of Inner Healing Models

Neil Anderson - The Bondage Breaker

Dr. Neil Anderson is the founder of *Freedom in Christ Ministries* and the former chairman of the Department of Practical Ministry at Talbot Theological Seminary. He is a prolific author, having written many books on the subject of freedom through Christ. His book *The Bondage Breaker* addresses the subject of spiritual warfare and how to

² Nagib, 25.

overcome the assaults of the enemy. It is Anderson's contention that God desires His children to live in freedom. According to Anderson, experiencing freedom in Christ "requires both submitting to God and resisting the devil (Jas 4:7)."³

Anderson has many years of experience helping people overcome suicidal thoughts, depression and unfulfilling lives through a relation with Christ. He believes Satan is at the root of these issues. The problem is not just a psychological problem; it is the result of spiritual warfare. He debunks the idea that what the Bible calls demonic activity is mental illness. To treat bondages (mental illness) as simply a psychological problem "creates a false dichotomy that implies a distinct division between the human soul and spirit."⁴ Anderson believes that the devil and demons are actual beings and that believers experience victory by winning the battle in their minds. Issues in the life of believers need to be addressed in both the soul and the spirit for true lasting freedom to result. In Anderson's words, he "turned another significant corner when I discovered the spiritual battle that is going on for our minds and learned why it is so important to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."⁵ Much of Anderson's approach centers on renewing the mind.

This is a comprehensive book addressing many issues relating to living in freedom. The book addresses sin and temptation, how to deal with accusations, false teachers and false prophets. The book includes a section on how to recognize and avoid deception. Having walked the readers through the steps to freedom, Anderson instructs

³ Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2000), 12.

⁴ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 21.

⁵ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 5.

the believers in how to maintain their freedom. Anderson lists seven steps to freedom in Christ. They are:

1. Renouncing all cultic practices and wrong priorities.
2. Repenting of and forsaking all forms of deception.
3. Walking in forgiveness (releasing bitterness).
4. Submitting to God.
5. Walking in humility and repenting of pride.
6. Confessing any sins and sin cycles.
7. Renouncing any generational sins or curses.⁶

Freedom comes from believers first knowing who they are in Christ, and then growing into the reality of that truth through a process of maturation. Christians are not becoming children of God; rather, they are already “children of God who are becoming like Christ.”⁷ Knowing their position in Christ is key, as “when we don’t understand our spiritual heritage, we don’t experience the freedom and fruitfulness which is intrinsic to our position in Christ.”⁸ Anderson believes that victory is accomplished by “choosing the truth.”⁹ The mission is not to “dispel the darkness but to turn on the light.”¹⁰ He believes that “we overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil by choosing the truth.”¹¹ While demons are all around, they are not to be the focus nor should they be feared. Anderson likens demons to “germs which are all around us.”¹² Thus, Anderson believes that Christians should not fear demons anymore than they fear germs.

⁶ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 240-243.

⁷ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 12.

⁸ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 82.

⁹ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 120.

¹⁰ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 120.

¹¹ Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 120.

¹² Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker*, 92.

Anderson's book succeeds in teaching believers about spiritual warfare from the standpoint of who they are in Christ. It differs from *Sozo* in that it does not lead the reader into an encounter with the Trinity. This is where *Sozo* appears to be more effective. However, this book would be a great resource for someone to read after a *Sozo*, as it would help instruct him or her in how to stay free.

Dr. David Seamands - Healing for Damaged Emotions

Dr. David Seamands was a missionary and pastor who also served as Professor of Pastoral Ministries and Counselor in Residence at Asbury Theological Seminary. His book, *Healing for Damaged Emotions* was written “in response to a group of people that were not helped through traditional means: preaching of the Word, commitment to Christ, the filling of the Spirit, prayer, or the Sacraments.”¹³ Seamands believes that infirmities, which lie between sicknesses and sins, are scars that have never been healed. While these infirmities are not sin, they do “undermine our resistance to temptation.”¹⁴

According to Seamands, infirmities are a “realm of problems that requires a special kind of prayer and a deeper level of healing by the Spirit.”¹⁵ Believers’ emotional health requires the healing of these infirmities. This is something that happens subsequent to salvation. In *Healing for Damaged Emotions* he writes, “Salvation does not give instant emotional health.”¹⁶ Seamands gives the example of a person who is a

¹³ David A. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Personal Growth Bookshelf (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991), Kindle (Location 40).

¹⁴ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 535-536).

¹⁵ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 96-98).

¹⁶ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Location 123).

perfectionist before becoming a believer in Christ. After salvation they are prone to transfer that perfectionism over to their relationship with God, resulting in condemnation.¹⁷

Like many inner healing models, Seamands recognizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in bringing healing to those who are wounded. He recognizes that “certain areas of our lives need special healing by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸ Unlike models such as *Sozo*, where freedom comes through an encounter with God, Seamands views inner healing as a process. Seamands believes healing from wounds requires a reprogramming of the mind, which is “not done overnight by a crisis experience.”¹⁹

Seamands elucidates the two major causes of emotional problems among Christians, which both pertain to forgiveness. First, “The failure to understand, receive, and live out God’s unconditional grace and forgiveness,” and second “the failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace to other people.”²⁰ Seamands believes that people cannot experience God’s grace fully until they learn to forgive themselves. Failure to extend forgiveness to others prevents them from receiving the forgiveness they need to be healthy emotionally. He stresses the importance of forgiveness in declaring that the “world is made for forgiveness; it is made for grace; it is made for love in all of life.”²¹ Seamands identifies three criteria to determine when believers need to forgive:

1. The resentment test – “Is there someone you resent, you’ve never let off the hook?”
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¹⁷ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Location 167).

¹⁸ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Location 126).

¹⁹ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Location 126).

²⁰ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 374-376).

²¹ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Location 350).

2. The responsibility test – “Do you take responsibilities for your own faults and failures?”
3. Reminder and reaction test – “Do you find yourself reacting against a person because he reminds you of someone else?”²²

In addition to forgiveness, Seamands stresses the importance of having the proper self-esteem. He comments, “Nothing is more necessary to their Christian growth and their nurture in the Lord than developing a good, healthy Christian self-image.”²³ To develop a healthy self-image, one must understand the grace of God. Seamands differentiates between low self-esteem and humility and rejects the idea that a self-belittling attitude leads to holiness.²⁴ Christians have a choice to get their self-esteem from what Satan says or from what God says. When believers recognize that they are greatly loved and valued by God, they will have the correct self-esteem. They come to this place by partnering with the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to correct them when they belittle themselves.

Seamands devotes two chapters to addressing depression. He points out that the Scriptures clearly show that it is possible for Christians to be depressed.²⁵ Depression is not a sign of failure but is primarily caused by indecision, anger or injustice.²⁶ Seamands borrows specific ways of overcoming depression from Martin Luther who battled depression. These methods include:

1. Avoid being alone
 2. Seek help from others.
 3. Sing - make music.
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²² Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 471-490).

²³ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 865-866).

²⁴ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 1022-1023).

²⁵ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 1695-1696).

²⁶ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 1854-1871).

4. Give thanks.
5. Lean on the power of the Word.
6. Rest in the presence of the Holy Spirit.²⁷

Seamands concludes the book by taking a realistic approach. Pain and suffering are in this world; no one is exempt from this. Believers must learn to rely on the Holy Spirit who is the *paraclete*, the one called alongside to help.

Seamands covers a variety of subjects in a relatively small book. While the subjects he covers are critical to inner healing, he fails to provide adequate instruction that will allow the reader to experience breakthrough. He discusses forgiveness but fails to sufficiently explain what forgiveness is and how to receive it. His discussions regarding self-esteem are accurate, but once again lack depth. Without a more in-depth understanding of how the Father views His children, it is difficult to develop a proper, biblical self-esteem. Seamands provides limited insight regarding a believer's identity as a new creation in Christ. A proper understanding of these truths is vital to walk in freedom. While the topics covered are valid and his approach is sound, more depth is needed to assist the reader in experiencing the reality of these truths.

Leanne Payne - The Healing Presence

The Healing Presence by Leanne Payne centers on a simple yet profound truth: healing is available in the Presence of God. Payne states, "We can never substitute our learning and counseling 'skills' for the simplicity of opening the eyes and ears of our

²⁷ Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, Kindle (Locations 1932-1968).

hearts to God.”²⁸ Payne operates from the perspective that believers must live in utter dependence on the Holy Spirit. She refers to this as “celebrating our smallness.”²⁹

Payne lives with the conviction that the indwelling Presence of God is the foundation for the Christian walk. She states that believers “practice the Presence of Jesus within, . . . without . . . And all around.”³⁰ This is not an intellectual understanding but an experiential reality. In His presence, “the dark seeds and bitter roots, . . . self-hatred, fear, and guilt would be revealed and yielded up to God.”³¹ Payne defines practicing the Presence of God as abiding in Him. This requires going past intellectual roadblocks by focusing on Him. This is an act of the will, which is done by faith. Payne believes in this so strongly that she states, “There is nothing needy souls need more than enablement to believe the Scriptural revelation that God is indeed with them and loves them.”³²

It is in the Presence of God that believers experience the power, the anointing of God. When Christians are abiding in Him, they are able “to do the works of God.”³³ Abiding in Him is not the result of human effort or ability. Payne believes that for effective ministry, “looking to God and listening to Him is essential.”³⁴ So essential is the Presence of God that Payne defines the fall as “separation from the Presence.” It is

²⁸ Leanne Payne, *The Healing Presence: Curing the Soul through Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 24.

²⁹ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 24.

³⁰ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 14.

³¹ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 24.

³² Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 32.

³³ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 42.

³⁴ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 45.

through the fall that mankind slipped from “God-consciousness into the hell of self and self-consciousness.”³⁵

Practicing the Presence of God is central to inner healing. Payne observes that practicing the Presence of God is to “practice the presence of the new man (self) rather than the old.”³⁶ Through the practice of the Presence of God, believers learn to accept themselves in Him, no longer trying to gain acceptance through their own work or righteousness. It is in Him that believers find what Payne describes as “the fullness of being.”³⁷ Payne’s view of the ministry of inner healing is simply assisting individuals to experience the Presence of God. It is in her words, “learning to invoke the Presence of the Lord, of coming into that Presence with the needy one, and there listening for the healing word that God is always sending to the wounded and alienated.”³⁸ Healing prayer allows believers to see themselves in Him. In this place they are able to walk away from the false self-image that plagues them.

Payne addresses the Christian’s needs to forgive and to forsake sin. Without a willingness to do this, restoration and healing cannot take place. Issues of unforgiveness and sin are often the result of wounds the person has suffered. In His Presence, God reveals what is in someone’s heart; it is in that place that they are empowered to forgive, to repent and to receive His healing. Much of this is similar to what takes place in *Sozo* where the individual allows God to reveal any lies and wounds they have carried. As they repent of these, God reveals truth, bringing healing to the person.

³⁵ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 53.

³⁶ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 54.

³⁷ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 54.

³⁸ Payne, *The Healing Presence*, 61.

Payne differs from *Sozo* in the area of guided imagery. *Sozo* relies on each member of the Trinity revealing themselves to the client rather than having the client visualize a specific image. In this regard, *Sozo* is more powerful in that the images, thoughts, etc., come from the Trinity and not a facilitator. This book is a good resource for helping someone understand the importance of experiencing and living from the Presence of God. As one learns to experience the Presence of God, healing often results.

Francis MacNutt - Healing

Francis MacNutt is a former Catholic priest who was heavily involved in the Catholic Charismatic movement in the 1960s and 1970s. His book *Healing* addresses all forms of healing including physical healing, inner healing and deliverance. In this work, MacNutt addresses many of the traditions that have robbed the church of healing. While teaching in seminary, MacNutt became distressed at the fact that people were facing problems they could not resolve; some were at the point of suicide, while others suffered with addictions or feelings of worthlessness. These were problems that could not be overcome by sheer willpower.³⁹ MacNutt realized that “telling people to repent and change simply didn’t work for many hurting Christians.”⁴⁰

MacNutt does not believe that physical or emotional sickness is a blessing of God. While he admits that sickness is at times a mystery, he considers it a “mystery of evil.”⁴¹ MacNutt believes that Jesus desires to heal the whole person and that God works in many

³⁹ Francis MacNutt, *Healing*, rev. & expanded. ed. (Notre Dame, ID: Ave Maria Press, 1999), Kindle (Locations 45-47).

⁴⁰ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 1688-1689).

⁴¹ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 49-51).

ways to heal the sick. To deny that God heals is to deny His goodness. He comments that, “the ideal is a team effort to get the sick well through every possible means.”⁴² MacNutt makes the observation that healing and deliverance were a major thrust of the early church. Over time, this core belief changed to the point where sickness was considered by many to be a blessing. He believes that this was the result of the church being affected by a “pagan view of the universe . . . In these, the body is seen as an encumbrance, if not an enemy, to the spirit.”⁴³ This “body as enemy” line of spiritual thinking is, in MacNutt’s view, one of the main reasons why the church no longer pursues healing.⁴⁴ MacNutt divides types of sickness into three categories:

1. Sickness of our spirit, caused by our own personal sin.
2. Sickness (e.g., anxiety) caused by the emotional hurts of our past.
3. Physical sickness in our bodies, caused by disease or accidents.⁴⁵

A complete healing ministry will address all three kinds of sickness. He outlines four basic prayer methods that are required for a complete healing ministry:

1. Prayer for repentance (for personal sin).
2. Prayer for inner healing (for emotional problems).
3. Prayer for physical healing (for physical sickness).
4. Prayer for deliverance (exorcism) (for demonic oppression).⁴⁶

MacNutt understands that emotional and physical healing are interrelated. He believes that much healing, both physical and emotional, comes from forgiveness. Conversely, unforgiveness blocks healing and can support or cause sickness. He

⁴² MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 84-86).

⁴³ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 608-609).

⁴⁴ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 689-690).

⁴⁵ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 1538-1539).

⁴⁶ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 1540-1541).

considers forgiveness to be “the most important form of repentance.”⁴⁷ MacNutt’s journey into inner healing progressed as a result of seeing Christian people who were unable to overcome depression. He studied inner healing from Agnes Sanford, learning that “we are deeply affected not only by what we do-our own sins and mistakes--but by what happens to us through the sins of others and the evil in the world (original sin).”⁴⁸

One of MacNutt’s keys to inner healing was the healing of memories. MacNutt sees inner healing as a walk back in time to free people from the wounds of the past. This is done through a two-step process:

1. Bringing to light the things that have hurt the person. Usually this is best done with another person; even the talking out of the problem is in itself part of the healing process.
2. Praying to ask the Lord to heal the "binding effects of the hurtful incidents of the past."⁴⁹

Ideally, this is performed by someone proficient in spiritual gifts and possessing knowledge of psychology. It is important that sensitivity be exercised when ministering inner healing. MacNutt stresses that those involved in inner healing ministry should never force themselves upon others.⁵⁰

MacNutt’s Catholic roots are evident in many of his approaches. He devotes an entire chapter to the role of sacraments in healing ministry. MacNutt believes not only that can Jesus heal inner wounds, but also that He can fill the empty places with His love.⁵¹ MacNutt’s approach is in many ways similar to *Sozo*. In both models, past wounds

⁴⁷ MacNutt, Kindle (Location 1608).

⁴⁸ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 1712-1713).

⁴⁹ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 1729-1732).

⁵⁰ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 1746-1747).

⁵¹ MacNutt, Kindle (Locations 1714-1716).

are being addressed; in both models, the client encounters God through prayer.

MacNutt's approach is not as structured as *Sozo*, however. One of *Sozo*'s benefits is that it is a well-defined model. This has allowed ministries all over the world to be trained in its application. In *Sozo*, the client encounters the Trinity directly. In MacNutt's approach, the client encounters God through the facilitator. While this can be effective, experience indicates that greater breakthrough occurs when the client hears from God directly for himself or herself.

Review of Other Christian Models

Dr. H. Norman Wright - Healing for the Father Wound

Dr. Wright is a licensed family and child therapist and a certified trauma specialist. He is currently the research professor of Christian Education at Talbot School of Theology.⁵² *Healing for the Father Wound* addresses inner healing from a Christian counseling perspective. The book addresses a specific type of wound, specifically women who have sustained wounds from their fathers. This book was included in this review as it addresses a different Christian approach to healing of wounds than typical inner healing ministries.

Wright believes that “who you are today was shaped by your father. He continues to influence you.”⁵³ He views inner healing as a process, observing, “this is sometimes a

⁵² H. Norman Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound: A Trusted Christian Counselor Offers Time-Tested Advice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Pub. Group, 2008), Kindle (Locations 53-56).

⁵³ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Location 82).

long and lonely battle that you wage.”⁵⁴ Wounding can occur through abuse or neglect.

These wounds create an emotional void that in Wright’s view “cannot be filled by anything else.”⁵⁵ Wright identifies four common heart problems that can be related to the father wound:

1. The bruised heart - This develops from a lack of validation, attention or approval from important people.⁵⁶
2. The performance heart - This is a heart that feels it needs to achieve, in order to be valued.⁵⁷
3. The hardened heart - This occurs when a woman shuts down in response to hurts.⁵⁸
4. The addicted heart - This is a heart that latches onto people, substances in an attempt to fill the wound.⁵⁹

Much of the book describes certain exercises that Wright prescribes as part of the road to healing from father wounds. One of the exercises is to “write down messages from Dad that you want to keep and those you want to erase.”⁶⁰ Wright suggests that daughters interview their fathers to help them get to know and understand them. He includes a questionnaire that he suggests be used for the interview. He has the readers recount the best and worst memories they have of their father and relate how those memories affected them. Wright believes, “to forget past pain we need to make peace with our past.”⁶¹ These exercises are designed to help the reader on that journey.

⁵⁴ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Location 104).

⁵⁵ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Locations 124-127).

⁵⁶ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Locations 206-207).

⁵⁷ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Locations, 223-225).

⁵⁸ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Location 229).

⁵⁹ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Locations 235-236).

⁶⁰ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Location 882).

⁶¹ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Locations 776-777).

Wright mentions an option for women who cannot reconcile with their fathers for various reasons: in this case he suggests that the individual speaks to Father God and says, “Daddy, I’ve been waiting for you.”⁶² In response, Father God will reply, “I’m so glad, because I’ve been waiting for you for a long time!”⁶³ While this is a viable approach, very little space in this book is spent discussing the nature of Father God and how much He loves and accepts His children. Very little instruction is given on how to experience God’s love. Wright’s process of working through the wounds is accomplished without any direct contact with the Trinity. No discussion is provided regarding entering into the Presence of God or hearing from God Himself. God as the healer and restorer is not given sufficient emphasis.

Wright also discusses the need to forgive. He likens forgiveness to letting go and considers it a process. He encourages the woman to write down three things for which she wishes her father would apologize. Then she is to write down what it would mean for him to apologize. Finally, she is to write down what it means if he does not apologize and three things for which she should apologize to him. This is a very elaborate approach to forgiveness. While forgiveness can be difficult, particularly if abuse is involved, Wright makes the process more complicated and difficult than it needs to be. Nowhere does he mention the Holy Spirit’s role in the healing process.

While Wright’s intentions were good, this book was disappointing. Unlike *Sozo*, or the works of Leanne Payne or Francis MacNutt, very little is mentioned regarding healing occurring in the Presence of God. Unlike Neil Anderson’s work, Wright does not

⁶² Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Locations 1164-1167).

⁶³ Wright, *Healing for the Father Wound*, Kindle (Locations 1164-1167).

mention who the believer is in Christ. While the love of Father God is mentioned, it is not connected to the healing process. Experience with *Sozo* indicates that healing happens when God reaches down and heals the wounded heart through revealing truth and love. This book fails to connect the reader to the love of the Father, which is central to receiving healing.

John Coe and Todd Hall - Psychology in the Spirit: Contours of a Transformational Psychology

Dr. John Coe is Director of the Institute of Spiritual Formation at Talbot School of Theology at Biola University. Dr. Todd Hall is a professor at the Rosemead School of Psychology at Biola University. Their book, *Psychology in the Spirit: Contours of a Transformational Psychology* is written in an attempt to integrate psychology with Christianity. The book explains the necessity of a biblical worldview for psychotherapy to be effective. Coe and Hall do not believe that the Christian faith can be separated from the rest of one's life. They make the comment, "The religious life is not a special compartment in an otherwise secular life. Rather, the religious life is an entire way of life."⁶⁴ They believe that failure to integrate Christian values into psychotherapy results in "a costly division between secular and sacred."⁶⁵ Coe and Hall devote considerable space in the book explaining why it is necessary to integrate Christian beliefs into

⁶⁴ John H. Coe and Todd W. Hall, *Psychology in the Spirit: Contours of a Transformational Psychology*, Christian Worldview Integration Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), Kindle (Locations 61-62).

⁶⁵ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Location 109).

psychotherapy. They call their integrated model a “transformational psychology.”⁶⁶ Coe and Hall are unapologetic in their view, clearly stating, “The book is fundamentally an attempt to reclaim what is rightfully Christian; namely, a robust way to do a science of the self (psychology) in the Spirit.”⁶⁷

Coe and Hall strongly hold to a biblical worldview. They explain the importance of understanding the effects of the fall of man, sin, Satan and the cross of Jesus Christ. They ask the question, “Am I doing therapy within the presence of God or alone in my own power?”⁶⁸ Rather than rejecting secular psychology, they are adding the wisdom of God to psychotherapy. They clearly state that their goal is to “do science and psychology grounded in reality and the realities of faith.”⁶⁹ They believe that integrating science and faith helps to develop a more complete understanding of man. They carry the conviction that “there is an objective source of values embedded in God's natural law, particularly in the structure of human nature, that tells us how humans ought to function.”⁷⁰

Coe and Hall believe that not all knowledge is necessarily intellectual. They categorize knowledge as head knowledge and what they describe as “gut-level knowledge.”⁷¹ According to Coe and Hall, the brain processes gut-level knowledge using a different system than the processes for head knowledge.⁷² They refer to this knowledge

⁶⁶ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Location 274).

⁶⁷ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Locations 400-401).

⁶⁸ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Location 210).

⁶⁹ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Locations 766).

⁷⁰ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Locations 1180-1181).

⁷¹ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Location 1817).

⁷² Coe and Hall, Kindle (Locations 1851-1852).

as “unthought knowns.”⁷³ These unthought knowns include things individuals know about themselves, God and others. Understanding these unthought knowns and developing a holistic view requires openness to the Holy Spirit and to relational experiences.

Coe and Hall believe it is critical that a transformational psychology be grounded in the Scriptures. They state that the Bible has an authority from God and that it is “a divine interpretation of particular aspects of nature.”⁷⁴ Many of their beliefs are grounded in the truths of Scripture. They believe that one cannot truly be psychologically healthy apart from a personal relationship with God. This relationship can only come through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Through Jesus, believers are made new creations in Christ. Coe and Hall state that in Christ, the believer is at peace, and that the “quest for identity is over.”⁷⁵ It is in Christ that one discovers their true identity. Experiencing the vast love of God is what causes one to be at rest.

Contemporary psychology rejects the biblical view of mankind, however. As a result, it is incapable of ministering to the whole person, as it does not recognize the spiritual nature of men and women. These are serious shortcomings to secular models of psychotherapy that hinders its effectiveness. By rejecting God, the nature of man, the fall of man, sin, Satan and redemption, secular psychology is unable to address root issues in people. These root issues are not mental but spiritual and must be understood and

⁷³ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Location 1161).

⁷⁴ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Locations 1998-1999).

⁷⁵ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Location 2704).

addressed with the help of the Holy Spirit. Coe and Hall believe the modern view of psychotherapy embraces a model where causes are external, and not within the person.⁷⁶

The final section of the book addresses the question of how to integrate psychotherapy with what Coe and Hall call “spiritual direction.” While psychotherapy focuses on cognitive understanding, spiritual direction engages in a relationship with God. Coe and Hall believe that both disciplines are important and necessary for true healing to take place. They are candid that while psychotherapy is helpful, it will not result in complete healing without a relationship with God. Coe and Hall discuss the need to combine spiritual direction with psychotherapy as a comprehensive means of treatment. However, they do not suggest a model to accomplish this.

This book did an excellent job in explaining the need to integrate the cognitive and spiritual sides of therapy. A transformational model that combines a God encounter, such as what happens in a *Sozo* session, with cognitive information from a psychological perspective does have the potential to be an effective means of ministry. As the book is a theoretical, academic study, practical models need to be developed to explore the full possibilities of this approach.

Dr. Tammy Smith - Soul Healing: Living Beyond the Pain of your Past

Dr. Tammy Smith is a professional counselor and conference speaker. The purpose of her book *Soul Healing* is to help people learn to be healed of their hurts and live in total freedom. She believes that God desires to take wounded people ‘back to a

⁷⁶ Coe and Hall, Kindle (Location 2852).

place of pre-hurt.”⁷⁷ She paints a picture of a loving, faithful God who offers complete forgiveness. She believes true healing does not exist “outside of Jesus Christ.”⁷⁸

Smith believes that most people live with a gap between the life they can have in Christ and the life they are actually living; this gap exists as a result of damage from past wounds.⁷⁹ Many people ignore the pain, which does not produce healing. Smith believes that “unexamined pain can and often does rule us.”⁸⁰ Smith believes that the battle plan of the enemy is to target relationships, and this is the source of most wounding. Living free from wounding requires Christians to recognize the source of the battle. While individuals must resist the devil (Jas 4:7), they cannot resist what they do not see coming. It is therefore imperative to understand the schemes of the enemy.

Smith divides wounds into wounds of commission and wounds of omission. Wounds of commission are the result of things done to people such as rejection, teasing and abuse. Wounds of omission are wounds of neglect and abandonment. When the wound is of commission, a lie comes in to fill it; the lie grows and becomes part of the person. Since the lie grows within the person, they do not recognize it as a wound. They think the lie is simply a part of who they are. Lies of omission operate differently. Smith believes the fundamental human need is unconditional love. When this is missing, a void

⁷⁷ Tammy Smith, *Soul Healing: Living Beyond the Pain of Your Past* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing, 2006), 13.

⁷⁸ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 15.

⁷⁹ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 29.

⁸⁰ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 35.

is created. Individuals with wounds of omission then live from that void in an attempt to fill it. Smith contends, “Our emptiness drives much of our present day interactions.”⁸¹

Smith views healing as a journey that takes place through a process of four pathways: intellectual, spiritual, behavioral, and emotional. While what has happened to one’s heart may not be his or her fault, it is still one’s responsibility. Recognizing the wound is a key first step towards freedom. This process starts by having the Holy Spirit reveal the wound to the wounded person. It is important for the individual to accept the reality of what happened. Burying the wound or denying that it happened will not bring healing. This is to be followed by a period of grieving. Smith makes it clear that grieving is a necessary part of the healing process.

The mental pathway is a battle over truth. This requires individuals to recognize not just the wound, but also their own coping mechanisms. Part of this pathway is to “take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Co 10:5). Lies must be recognized, renounced and replaced by the truth of God’s Word. It is during this pathway that people who have been wounded must forgive any and all who have hurt them. Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling.

The spiritual pathway is the recognition that this is a spiritual battle. It is on the spiritual pathway that individuals recognize and break the power of lies and strongholds over their lives. Much like the mental pathway, this is a battle over truth. Smith makes it clear that spiritual warfare is a truth encounter, not a power encounter.⁸² Depression, anxiety, etc., are to be addressed as spiritual issues and renounced, rebuked, and replaced

⁸¹ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 62.

⁸² Smith, *Soul Healing*, 213.

with truth. While in this battle, Smith encourages people to practice the Presence of God and to practice gratitude. Smith makes it clear that victory will not come without time spent “soaking in the presence of the Lord.”⁸³

The behavioral pathway is about making changes that support healing. This step should not be undertaken unless the individual has gone through the grieving process. Much of this step is similar to the previous steps in that it continues to require the process of recognizing lies, renouncing them and replacing them with truth. At this point in the process, the individual is encouraged to be in community. Smith makes the point that most wounding happens in relationships and healing will not take place without healthy relationships.

The fourth pathway is the emotional pathway. Smith observes, “Emotions are neither bad nor good. They just are.”⁸⁴ While emotions should not be ignored, they are not to be used as barometers for life. Individuals need to respond to their emotions in a healthy, constructive way. Smith likens emotions to having a visit from a friend. Emotions, like the friend, should be invited in, heard, but not allowed to dominate. She believes that, “because your emotions are a legitimate force God has given you, you cannot fight them.”⁸⁵ Rather than fighting emotions, she recommends asking God to reveal what is behind the emotions. While it is acceptable--even healthy--to experience these emotions, they should not dominate. Smith uses the example that if one feels

⁸³ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 217.

⁸⁴ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 243.

⁸⁵ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 247.

sadness, it is fine to be sad for a while and to listen to the sadness, provided that the person does not “lie down and roll over until it goes away.”⁸⁶

Despite all her suggestions, Smith fails to clearly explain how to deal with these emotions. She believes that brokenness is a key to healing and that to be broken is to die to self. She defines brokenness as “realizing He is all we have.”⁸⁷ Smith encourages the reader to pursue brokenness but fails to explain how to do this, or what this would look like. Nowhere does she discuss allowing the Spirit of God to come in and fill the broken places.

In her book, Smith adequately explains what it is to be wounded, and how God wants to heal people. Her sections on the importance of truth and recognizing that spiritual warfare is largely about truth are helpful. However, unlike *Sozo*, where the client is brought into an encounter with God, Smith fails to help connect the reader to God in a personal way. Without that step, freedom will continue to elude the wounded.

Review of Non-Christian Models

Dr. Brene Brown - The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are

Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. Her book is an attempt to help people rid themselves of harmful emotions such as fear, guilt, and shame. Brown encourages people to engage in what she

⁸⁶ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 247.

⁸⁷ Smith, *Soul Healing*, 255.

calls “wholehearted living” which requires individuals to love themselves. She states that “wholeheartedness is as much about embracing our tenderness and vulnerability as it is about developing knowledge and claiming power.”⁸⁸

Brown believes that one of the keys to wholehearted living is developing what she calls “shame resilience.” She defines shame as “the fear of not being enough.”⁸⁹ Shame causes individuals to hide; shame prevents people from living out of their authentic selves. Brown recognizes, “It’s hard to practice compassion when we’re struggling with our authenticity or when our own worthiness is off balance.”⁹⁰ This is a valid point. Hurt people rarely reach out in love and compassion. Christians that are wounded find it difficult to fulfill Jesus’ command to “love one another” (Jn 13:34). Overcoming shame requires individuals to “speak honestly and open about who we are.”⁹¹ Brown believes that this requires courage. She defines courage as “to speak one’s mind by telling all one’s heart.”⁹² However, she fails to explain how one would acquire the necessary courage to speak out.

Brown believes that people need to believe in their own worthiness. They need to give themselves “permission to fall apart and be imperfect.”⁹³ She believes that we “gain access to our worthiness” when we “let go of what other people think and own our

⁸⁸ Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2010), Kindle (Locations 86-91).

⁸⁹ Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Kindle (Location 60).

⁹⁰ Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Kindle (Locations 298-299).

⁹¹ Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Kindle (Location 329).

⁹² Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Kindle (Locations 327-328).

⁹³ Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Kindle (Location 469).

story.”⁹⁴ She states, “Love and belonging will always be uncertain.”⁹⁵ Brown differentiates between fitting in and belonging. Fitting in is when someone “becomes who they need to be to be accepted.”⁹⁶ When this happens, they no longer act from whom they really are. Belonging, on the other hand, is acting from one’s authentic self. People learn to live from their authentic selves when they learn to embrace who they are.

The Gifts of Imperfection achieved widespread appeal. It was a *New York Times* bestselling book. This book was included in this review because issues of shame, belonging, and self-worth are commonly addressed within *Sozo* inner healing sessions as well as other inner healing ministries. Examining popular approaches to these problems within our culture is relevant to this project. Does *The Gifts of Imperfection* provide an effective cure for these problems?

Brown did extensive research for this book and talks freely about her own journey. While many of her points are valid, her work falls short in that it fails to provide a foundation for the life she expects her readers to adopt. Brown wants her readers to believe that they are valuable, that they should live from their authentic selves. This is a valid biblical concept. However, without the biblical foundation for these truths, readers are left without a sound basis for accepting them. It is reasonable to believe in the worthiness and value of oneself based on the scripture that “we are fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:14). Brown, however, is asking the reader to accept this truth apart from knowing the God who inspired this verse. Christian faith is based on a relationship with a loving God revealed in three persons. It is based on truth revealed in

⁹⁴ Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Kindle (Locations 482-483).

⁹⁵ Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Kindle (Locations 510-511).

⁹⁶ Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, Kindle (Location 507).

the Holy Scriptures. Without a relationship with God, without the Bible, one is expected to accept something with little evidence. *Sozo* and other Christian inner healing models help individuals to understand their value through a relationship with a loving God. Apart from this relationship, one is left with concepts without the power of God necessary to bring healing.

Dr. Charles Whitfield - Memory and Abuse: Remembering and Healing the Effects of Trauma

Dr. Charles Whitfield is a licensed physician and psychotherapist. His book, *Memory and Abuse: Remembering and Healing the Effects of Trauma* is written to help individuals receive healing from hurts and wounds. Whitfield's book places particular emphasis on hurts and wounds sustained through traumatic events.

Whitfield attacks a modern belief that wounds from trauma are the result of “false memory syndrome” (FMS). FMS theory believes, “Some of our memories are true, some are a mixture of fact and fantasy, and some are false.”⁹⁷ Whitfield argues, “FMS denies the reality of the abuse and in doing so it invalidates the painful experience of the victim.”⁹⁸ FMS treats the trauma as a false memory rather than addressing it as a real event. While FMS may exist in some cases, labeling all traumas as FMS prevents trauma victims from receiving the correct treatment.

A common response to trauma is a numbing of the person’s awareness of their inner life. This may be accompanied with some degree of traumatic forgetting. This is a

⁹⁷ False Memory Syndrome Foundation, accessed April 13, 2014. <http://www.fmsfonline.org/>.

⁹⁸ Charles L. Whitfield, *Memory and Abuse: Remembering and Healing the Effects of Trauma* (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, 1995), Kindle (Location 182).

defense mechanism designed to shield the victim from ongoing pain from the trauma. For Whitfield, healing of past trauma is a process. He contends, “Remembering and accurately naming what happened in any traumatic experience is crucial to healing from its hurtful effects.”⁹⁹ Healing requires letting go of the hurt and letting go requires the victim to experience “exactly what it is that they are letting go of.”¹⁰⁰ The healing process requires the victim to work through layers of pain with the help of the therapist. This typically begins with identifying and addressing the “numbness, pain and confusion”¹⁰¹ that are associated with the results of the trauma.

Working through the pain requires the patient to identify the pain and talk through it. Healing requires the patient to accurately “remember and name the abuse.”¹⁰² Whitfield recommends that this take place in a support group setting. In this setting, the patient is looking for feedback from other group members.¹⁰³ The members of the support group are able to provide validation that can manifest in a variety of ways, “from simple listening to being supportive to being loyal.”¹⁰⁴ These support group activities are important steps in the process, as Whitfield believes that “validation is healing”¹⁰⁵ and that it happens in a safe environment.

⁹⁹ Whitfield, Kindle (Locations 2952-2953).

¹⁰⁰ Whitfield, Kindle (Locations 3361-3362).

¹⁰¹ Whitfield, Kindle (Locations 3025).

¹⁰² Whitfield, Kindle (Location 3107).

¹⁰³ Whitfield, Kindle (Locations 3053).

¹⁰⁴ Whitfield, Kindle (Locations 3226-3227).

¹⁰⁵ Whitfield, Kindle (Location 3225).

Whitfield prefers the concept of letting go rather than forgiveness as in his words, “forgiveness often feels forced.”¹⁰⁶ Letting go is releasing all of the stored pain that the patient never grieved over. This is different from biblical forgiveness where one releases the offending party from the debt they owe. Many inner healing models operate from the perspective that unforgiveness provides an avenue for satanic activity. Dr. Neil Anderson correctly observes, “After helping thousands find their freedom in Christ, I can testify that unforgiveness is the major reason people remain in bondage to the past.”¹⁰⁷ While letting go is preferable to holding on to the hurt it will not provide the freedom that forgiveness brings.

Whitfield includes new age concepts in his treatment. He says of the patient, “being willing to have our pain removed, we ask that the Holy Spirit remove it. And then we let it go.”¹⁰⁸ While he uses the term Holy Spirit, Whitfield clarifies his remark--this is not the Christian Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity. He says that the Holy Spirit is Divine energy, Prana, Chi or Ki. According to Whitfield the patient should “experientially choose love.”¹⁰⁹ He offers no explanation as how this should be done.

Whitfield’s approach is in sharp contrast to Coe and Hall’s approach in *Psychology in the Spirit*. Whitfield’s view fails to acknowledge that man is a spiritual being. Coming from a secular perspective, Whitfield does not mention sin, spiritual warfare, or redemption. As a result, Whitfield’s treatment fails to address spiritual root issues. His methods employ processes that typically are applied over a period of years.

¹⁰⁶ Whitfield, Kindle (Location 3360).

¹⁰⁷ Anderson, *Bondage Breaker*, 62.

¹⁰⁸ Whitfield, Kindle (Locations 3413-3414).

¹⁰⁹ Whitfield, Kindle (Location 3421).

While his methods can provide some help, they do not provide the complete freedom that Christian ministry can offer. When compared to inner healing models the contrast is even greater. Inner healing models provide an opportunity for the patient to encounter the love of God personally and relationally. Rather than being a method to manage or cope with the effects of trauma, encounters with God can bring complete healing and freedom to the patient.

Theoretical Conclusion

This review has demonstrated that a variety of methods exist in an attempt to bring inner healing to individuals. A clear distinction exists between the secular and Christian approaches. The secular models fail to recognize that humans are spiritual beings. They reject the biblical worldview regarding the fall of mankind and the need for redemption. As such, the secular models are limited in their treatment. While they do provide help, they are not equipped to address root issues in the heart of wounded individuals. Christian models benefit from an understanding of mankind as spiritual beings. The Christian perspective understands that bringing healing involves spiritual warfare. As such, Christian models are capable of bringing healing and freedom to those suffering from emotional wounds.

Within the Christian community a distinction can be made between the encounter-based models--such as *Sozo*, Leann Payne, and Francis MacNutt--and the counseling and teaching models. Both types of models have value. Encounter-based models help people experience healing from hearing God or encountering His presence. This can produce dramatic breakthroughs for people, even when they have suffered for years as a result of

abuse or trauma. The counseling and teaching models do not provide the same type of breakthrough. However, they provide a foundation that enables individuals to continue to maintain their freedom through an understanding of who they are in Christ. A combination of these models would provide a comprehensive inner healing approach to men and women.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Hypothesis

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of inner healing ministry within the context of Church on the Sound (COS), a local Long Island church. Inner healing ministry was performed using the *Sozo* inner healing model developed at Bethel Church in Redding, CA. The study sought to answer whether *Sozo* helps individuals receive healing from past hurts and emotional wounds and if it helps create greater intimacy with the members of the Trinity.

The hypothesis is that individuals participating in a *Sozo* session (*Sozo* clients) will experience inner healing in the form of greater joy, greater peace, less stress, freedom from hurts and wounds, as well as deliverance from sin and other bondages. It was also expected that the *Sozo* client would experience greater intimacy and freedom in their relationship with the Trinity as a direct result of their *Sozo* session.

Project Overview

The project took place over a six-week period within the existing *Sozo* ministry at COS. Twelve adult and one children's *Sozo* were conducted during that period. Eleven of the twelve adults participated in interviews conducted approximately one week after their *Sozo* sessions. One individual cancelled their interview and was not available to

reschedule. Their survey data is included in the survey data analysis as the team felt their survey numbers accurately reflected what transpired during their session. The one children's *Sozo* was not included in the analysis, as the survey questions were not structured for children.

Sozo sessions were conducted during the term of this project utilizing the existing COS *Sozo* team. The *Sozo* team ensured that the *Sozo* pre-tests were properly filled out and collected prior to the *Sozo* session. No modifications were made to the team members or the *Sozo* format during this project.

The *Sozo* sessions were conducted with the existing *Sozo* clients during that period. No attempt was made to screen specific clients for this study. This will ensure that the *Sozo* sessions used during the project are representative of COS's typical *Sozo* client population. All twelve of the clients claimed to be Christians. Three of the twelve clients were attending COS with one client a former member. All of the clients lived within two hours of the church by car. The clients during the project are considered representative of the current COS *Sozo* client base.

Research Design and Methodology

The *Sozo* project was designed so that the hypothesis could be adequately evaluated. Is *Sozo* effective? What constitutes an effective *Sozo*? What data was required to perform the evaluation? How could this data be gathered? Who were the necessary participants in the project? These questions must be addressed for the *Sozo* model to be properly evaluated.

The research was conducted using a phenomenological mixed model action research project. Phenomenological research is where, "the researcher describes the lived

experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants.”¹ The *Sozo* clients and the *Sozo* team provided the data used to evaluate the *Sozo* model. Participation is a necessary element of action research projects. Greenwood and Levin identify three elements required in action research: “action, research, and participation.”²

As Creswell observes, there are three fundamental steps to research: pose a question, collect data to answer the question, and present an answer to the question.³ A successful *Sozo* has already been defined as one that, results in greater joy and peace, less stress, freedom from hurts and wounds, as well as deliverance from sin and bondages and foster greater intimacy with the Trinity. The task at hand is to structure a project that collects data that can be used to corroborate or refute the hypothesis.

Data collection was complicated by the fact that the attributes to be studied were not easily measured. How does one measure levels of joy, or peace? This is very different than measuring someone’s blood pressure. What one individual considers peaceful, another might consider stressful. No absolute scale exists to measure these factors.

Since absolute measures were not available, these factors were measured on a relative scale. Has the *Sozo* client’s perceived level of peace changed as a result of their *Sozo* session? Do they believe that they are enjoying greater intimacy in their Christian lives as a result of the *Sozo* session? The perceived impact of *Sozo* from the vantage point of the client and the *Sozo* team served as the basis for the evaluation.

¹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 14.

² Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA SAGE Publications, Inc, 2006), Kindle (Locations 160-161).

³ John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall), 3.

The data was collected using a mixed model approach. Creswell observes that a mixed model project is one that “incorporates elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.”⁴ Four sets of data were collected. Two of the four sets of data were collected from the *Sozo* client to determine the effectiveness of *Sozo* from their perspective.

The first set of data came through the use of a pre-test and post-test survey. The pre-test survey was sent to the client and completed prior to their *Sozo* session. The post-test survey was completed directly after the *Sozo* session. The survey consisted of a series of questions using a Likert scale. The pre-test and post-test *Sozo* data was collated to determine what benefit the *Sozo* client believed they derived from the *Sozo* session. The survey consisted of twenty-one questions targeting four specific attributes: depression, anxiety, intimacy with God and forgiveness. A copy of the survey questions is found in Appendix A.

Bradburn, Sudman and Lansink stress the importance of asking the proper question in stating, “The precise wording of questions plays a vital role in determining the answers given by respondents.”⁵ Research has identified existing studies that have been used in evaluating many of the criteria that this project seeks to evaluate. Many of the pre-test / post-test survey questions were adapted from questions that were part of these studies. Developing questions based on accepted surveys helped to ensure that the questions asked would elicit accurate responses. Other questions were developed specifically for this study. The pre-test survey was tested on a sample group of

⁴ Creswell, *Research Design*, 3.

⁵ Norman M. Bradburn, Seymour Sudman, and Brian Wansink, *Asking Questions: The Definitive Guide to Questionnaire Design*, rev. ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004), Kindle (Location 73).

individuals to assure that the survey questions were understandable and could be completed in a reasonable period of time. All of the questions used the same Likert scale to minimize potential confusion when completing the survey.

The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) is an established scale used to measure depression. It was derived from, “clinical observations about the attitudes and symptoms displayed frequently by depressed psychiatric patients.”⁶ The American Psychological Association states, “The BDI demonstrates high internal consistency.”⁷ Questions adapted from the BDI were used to test the emotional health of the client.

Additional questions addressing anxiety and depression were adapted from the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS).⁸ The DASS is a scale developed by the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health. It is “designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress.”⁹ Lovibond’s study confirmed the reliability of the DASS scales.¹⁰

Questions used to measure the *Sozo* client’s relationship to God were adapted from the “Attachment to God Inventory Model” developed by Richard Beck and Angie

⁶ Aaron T Beck, “Psychometric Properties of the Beck Depression Inventory: Twenty-Five Years of Evaluation,” *Clinical Psychology Review* 8 (1988): 78.

⁷ “Beck Depression Inventory (BDI),” *American Psychological Association*, accessed March 3, 2014, <https://www.apa.org/pi/about/publications/caregivers/practice-settings/assessment/tools/beck-depression.aspx>.

⁸ “Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS),” *Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health*, accessed March 4, 2014, <http://www.acpmh.unimelb.edu.au/site.../DASS.pdf>.

⁹ “Depression Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS).”

¹⁰ P.F. Lovibond and S. H. Lovibond, “The structure of negative emotional states: Comparison of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) with the Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventories,” *School of Psychology, University of New South Wales, Sydney, N.S.W. 2052, Australia, Behavior Research Theory* 33, no. 3 (1988): 340.

McDonald.¹¹ In their paper, Beck and McDonald demonstrate that one's relationship with God can be described using an attachment model.¹² Beck and McDonald conducted three studies that validated their model and the questions used in the study. Since intimacy with the Trinity is a major goal of *Sozo*, using questions from this study will help to measure *Sozo*'s effectiveness.

Questions providing insight into the client's relationship with God were taken from the "Attitude Towards God Scale," (ATGS-9).¹³ The ATGS-9 scale measures both "positive attitudes towards God as well as anger and disappointment towards God."¹⁴ Results from this study showed that a relationship with God can "provide a sense of security, and indeed people often do report that they see this bond as a substantial source of comfort."¹⁵ Despite this, people do sometimes see their walk with God as a "source of conflict which can have clinical implications."¹⁶ The scale was refined and validated through a series of studies. Disappointment and anger towards God can be the result of past wounds. It is expected that individuals harboring these feelings can be helped through a *Sozo* session.

The second set of data was obtained through the use of interviews with the *Sozo* clients. This provided additional insight into the client's *Sozo* experience. As the

¹¹ Richard Allan Beck, and Angie McDonald. 2004. "Attachment to God: The Attachment to God Inventory, Tests of Working Model Correspondence, and an Exploration of Faith Group Differences." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 32, no. 2 (1994): 92-103.

¹² Beck and McDonald, 92.

¹³ Benjamin T. Wood, Everett L. Worthington, Ann Marie Yali, Julie Juola Exline, Jamie D. Aten, and Mark R. McMinn.. "Development, Refinement, and Psychometric Properties of the Attitudes Toward God Scale (ATGS-9)," *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 2, no. 3 (2010): 161.

¹⁴ Wood, et al., 149.

¹⁵ Wood, et al., 149.

interviews were conducted approximately a week after the session, they also served to validate if the perceived benefit derived from survey data was not simply the result of an immediate emotional response. The purpose of the interviews was two-fold. First, the interview questions delved more deeply into the specifics of each *Sozo* to provide additional insight as to *Sozo*'s benefits. Secondly, by conducting the interviews a week later it would provide insight into the ongoing benefit of the *Sozo*. Interview questions are located in Appendix C. The interviews were also used to validate the accuracy of the pre-test and post-test survey data.

The third set and fourth sets of data came from the *Sozo* team. The third set of data was field notes, kept by the *Sozo* team members during each *Sozo*. This data was originally intended to aid the *Sozo* team during their focus group sessions. It was quickly discovered that these field notes provided an additional source of information that was used during the interview process. Prior to the interview, the survey data was compared to the field note data. The result of this analysis helped to tailor the interview with the client. As the field note data provided the *Sozo* team's perspective on each session, this data was used to triangulate the results for each individual *Sozo*.

The fourth set of data came from two focus groups. These focus groups were conducted with *Sozo* team members actively supporting the church's *Sozo* ministry during the project's duration. The focus groups provided information regarding perceived effectiveness from the standpoint of the *Sozo* team. Personal experience had indicated that the *Sozo* client often receives a benefit from the *Sozo* beyond what the individual conducting the *Sozo* perceives. Focus group data was also useful in helping to understand what transpired in the *Sozo* sessions. Collecting data from both the clients and the *Sozo*

team helped to mitigate the potential bias that could result from gathering data from only one source. During the focus group session the team members were asked to comment on the effectiveness of *Sozo* in achieving emotional freedom and greater intimacy with the Trinity. The purpose of the focus group was to provide insight into the following questions regarding the effectiveness of *Sozo*. The standard questions used during the focus group sessions are available in Appendix B.

The data was then analyzed in two different ways. The first method was to look at three of the data sets as a whole. The survey data, the interviews and the focus group sessions were each compiled and analyzed. These three sets were then combined to provide an overall perspective. The second method involved triangulating data as it related to each individual *Sozo*. Here, the pre-test and post-test survey data, the field notes and the interviews were analyzed for each individual *Sozo* to determine the effectiveness of each of the sessions.

A typical *Sozo* session consists of the *Sozo* client and two *Sozo* team members, identified as first chair and second chair. The first chair has the responsibility to conducting the *Sozo* session. All dialogue with the client is handled by the first chair. This helps to minimize confusion and is less stressful for the client. The second chair has two main roles. The first role is to record anything that the client hears from the Trinity during the session. Any words of encouragement are recorded and given to the client at the end of the session. The other role of the second chair is to listen and hear anything that the Holy Spirit may say during the session. As the first chair is occupied with conducting the session, it is common for the second chair to sense something that the first chair does not recognize. In these cases, the second chair passes a note to the first chair

with this information. The first chair can then use this information in guiding the client through the session.

During the *Sozo* project, the second chair was also given the responsibility of recording the field notes during the session. This was to ensure that the process did not encumber the first chair. Following the session the first chair and second chair review the field notes and add to or amend them based on their conversation. This ensures that the field notes are an accurate representation of what occurred during the *Sozo*. A form was created to help in compiling the field notes. A copy of this form can be found in Appendix A.

Survey Data

The pre-test and post-test surveys each consisted of twenty-one identical questions, designed to provide data on four attributes. The attributes were depression, anxiety, intimacy with God and forgiveness. Each of the attributes was measured six times as several questions addressed two attributes. A table identifying attributes measured for each of the survey questions is in Appendix A. Responses were quantified on a scale from one to five with five being the most desirable or healthiest response. This meant each attribute had a possible minimum score of six and a maximum score of thirty with a median of eighteen. The pre-test and post-test surveys were compared to derive the percentage improvement from the *Sozo* as measured by the survey data.

The pre-test data provided an indication of the client's perceived emotional health prior to the *Sozo*. The possible total scores for the pre-test survey range from a minimum of twenty-four to a maximum of one hundred twenty with a median of seventy-two. Of

the twelve *Sozo* clients only two had total pre-test scores below seventy-two. One client was just below the median with a score of seventy-one while the other client had a score of forty-seven.

Scores for a total of forty-eight attributes were recorded (twelve clients with four attributes being measured per client). Out of the forty-eight attributes, only twelve, or twenty-five percent were below the median. This data indicates that the majority of the clients considered themselves to be emotionally healthy prior to the *Sozo*. It should be noted that the higher the pre-test score, the less opportunity there is for improvement.

The post-test scores showed an improvement in each of the attributes as follows:

Table 6.1 Percent Improvement for All Attributes

	Number of Attributes Measured	Pre Sozo	Post Sozo	Change	Percent Change	Potential Maximum Change	Percent of Maximum Change
Anxiety	12	232	313	81	34.9%	55.2%	63.3%
Depression	12	246	333	87	35.4%	46.3%	76.3%
Intimacy with God	12	278	329	51	18.3%	29.5%	62.2%
Forgiveness	12	251	320	69	27.5%	43.4%	63.3%
Total	48	1007	1295	288	28.6%	43.0%	66.5%

The Potential Maximum change is the theoretical value that would have been achieved had the post-test scores registered the optimum score for each question. The Percent of Maximum Change is a measure of the improvement in the score compared to the Potential Maximum Change. For example, depression saw a change from a pre-test score of 246 to a post-test score of 333, an improvement of 35.4%. Had the post-test scores been the theoretical maximum, that improvement would have been 46.3%. The actual improvement of 35.4% is therefore 76.3% of the maximum potential improvement.

The scores for anxiety, depression and forgiveness all improved by more than 25%. This was considered a significant change. The scores for intimacy with God improved 18.3%. At first look, this would appear to be a moderate change. However, this represents 62.2% of the potential maximum change, which is significant. The percent change for Intimacy with God was not as large as the other attributes, simply because the pre-test scores were higher for Intimacy with God than the other attributes. The change in test scores from pre-test to post-test indicates that *Sozo* is an effective inner healing ministry. However, the pre-test scores indicate that most of the clients viewed themselves as having good emotional health prior to the *Sozo*.

Was *Sozo* effective in helping those who recognized that they were in need of a significant healing and/or breakthrough? To help answer that question, the survey scores were analyzed for those attributes that had a pre-test total of below 18, the median, for each attribute for each client. Of the 48 total attributes measured, 12 were below the median. The data was analyzed in the same manner as the data for the total population.

Table 6.2 Percent Improvement for All Attributes below the Median

Attribute	Number of Attributes Measured	Pre-Test	Post Sozo	Change	Percent Change	Potential Maximum Change	Percent of Maximum Change
Anxiety	5	71	134	63	88.7%	111.3%	79.7%
Depression	2	21	56	35	166.7%	185.7%	89.7%
Intimacy with God	1	15	30	15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Forgiveness	4	63	102	39	61.9%	90.5%	68.4%
Total	12	170	322	152	89.4%	111.8%	80.0%

The data shows an improvement in survey scores of 89.4% as a result of the *Sozo*. This is 80% of the theoretical maximum improvement possible. This strongly suggests that *Sozo* was effective in bringing inner healing to those in need.

Not everyone who schedules a *Sozo* has a deeply perceived need. It is not uncommon for individuals to participate in a *Sozo* as a type of emotional “check up.” Does *Sozo* provide any benefit to these individuals? This question was analyzed by examining the data for all attributes with a pre-test survey score above the median score of 18. Thirty-five of the 48 total attributes met this criteria. The data is displayed in the table below:

Table 6.3 Percent Improvement for all Attributes at or above the median

Attribute	Number of Attributes Measured	Pre-Test	Post Sozo	Change	Percent Change	Potential Maximum Change	Percent of Maximum Change
Anxiety	7	161	179	18	11.2%	30.4%	36.7%
Depression	9	207	249	42	20.3%	30.4%	66.7%
Intimacy with God	11	263	299	36	13.7%	25.5%	53.7%
Forgiveness	8	188	218	30	16.0%	27.7%	57.7%
Total	35	819	945	126	15.4%	28.2%	54.5%

The results show a moderate benefit for all the attributes. This is reasonable, considering that the pre-test scores were high and therefore do not provide as much room for improvement. What is interesting is that for these attributes, results of the *Sozo* show an improvement of 54.5% of the maximum potential benefit. This is significantly less than the benefit for those attributes below the median. In an effort to understand this, the post-test data was then compared to the theoretical maximum score for each of the attributes. When this was done the results showed that the post-test scores were 90% of the theoretical maximum as follows:

Table 6.4 Post-Test Percent of Theoretical Maximum

Attribute	Percent Theoretical Maximum
Anxiety	85.2%
Depression	92.2%
Intimacy with God	90.6%
Forgiveness	90.8%
Total	90.0%

This data indicates that *Sozo* continued to be of benefit, even when the pre-test scores indicated no significant need of healing.

Interview Data

While the survey data is encouraging, it does not provide a complete picture. In addition to the pre-test and post-test surveys, phone interviews were conducted with the *Sozo* clients. Out of the twelve *Sozos* performed, eleven of the clients agreed to the interview process.

The interviews were conducted approximately one week after the *Sozo*. While this does not provide a long-term view, it does provide additional insight into *Sozo*'s effectiveness. If the result of the *Sozo* was merely an emotional response, without any real healing, the interviews should show that there was no lasting benefit. If the benefits from the *Sozo* remained, then there would be reason to believe that something significant had occurred.

A standard set of interview questions were used in the interviews. In addition to these questions, the pre-test and post-test surveys and the field notes from the *Sozo* team were utilized during the interviews. This allowed the interview to pinpoint specific details

that may have occurred in a particular *Sozo*. The results of the interviews were extremely insightful. The interviews provided the richest data of all the data sets utilized in this project. The interviews provided insight into the *Sozo* process that was not possible from the survey data. In several cases, the *Sozo* process provided a more significant breakthrough in the client's life than what was indicated by the survey. This section will focus on the interview data as a whole. Details regarding each interview will be discussed in the section where each of the individual *Sozos* are reviewed.

The interviews highlighted how a *Sozo* session can free someone from an issue they were unaware of. Debbie's pre-test survey had a score of thirty for forgiveness, the maximum possible.¹⁶ During the session however, God showed her several areas of her life where she needed to forgive relatives. She remarked that she "didn't realize the weight or significant or impact they had on my life."

Debbie also experienced freedom from anxiety. Again, her pre-test survey scores for anxiety were thirty, the maximum score possible. During the pre-test survey, her answer to the question, "I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life," was strongly disagree. However, during her *Sozo*, it became clear that she had been hampered by her need to be the responsible adult. When asked about this her response was, "When I think of anxiety I think of extreme situations where maybe inability to cope and I don't see that in me." The impact of getting set free from anxiety was huge for Debbie. She commented that, "I feel relieved, I just keep feeling free." This is one of the strengths of *Sozo*. By inviting the Trinity to come and speak allows the client to be set free from wounds, bondages, even when they are not aware of them.

¹⁶ All of the names, places and details have been changed to protect the anonymity of the clients, their relatives and friends and the members of the *Sozo* team.

Debbie's pre-test survey scores regarding anxiety revealed a common problem: that of lowered expectations. As long as she was able to cope, Debbie considered herself to be healthy. During her *Sozo*, Debbie encountered the peace of God in a new way. It was then that she learned that she did not have to live with the anxiety that she had carried for so long. It is not unusual for people to enter a *Sozo* thinking they are doing fine simply because they are coping with fears, anxieties, bondages. It is when they encounter the love and power of God in a real and personal way that they learn they can live free from those areas of bondage.

Mario's interview also revealed a breakthrough significantly greater than what his survey data indicated. His scores for the "Intimacy with God" attribute showed an improvement of 9%. The interview however, revealed a much more significant breakthrough. As a result of his *Sozo*, Mario realized, "Father God really wants to be in a loving relationship, not a business relationship. And then, Holy Spirit isn't just around me but is within me and it doesn't come and go." When questioned further he agreed that prior to his *Sozo*, his knowledge of God was conceptual, but now he knew it in experience.

Timothy came into the *Sozo* hoping to be freed from depression. While complete freedom did not happen, he was freed from heaviness he was experiencing due to occult activity within his family. What was remarkable about this was that he was unaware that any occult activity existed. He commented, "I wasn't aware of the occult that came out in the meeting and I guess Jesus revealed that to me. "When asked how this was revealed to him he replied, "I saw pictures of people involved in the Freemasons that I hadn't even thought of and never really, something that was a memory from decades ago which came

that was quite vivid.” It is noticeable that in his walk with God, he did not typically see pictures or have visions. However, in his *Sozo*, God revealed the occult activity through a mental picture he was during the session. This illustrates how *Sozo* is effective in identifying and freeing individuals from root issues even when the individual does not know the source of these issues.

Of the eleven individuals who were interviewed, nine individuals experienced significant breakthrough. One individual received some benefit, but not the freedom they were seeking. *Sozo* had no impact on one individual. Overall comments by the clients regarding the *Sozo* session were:

Timothy: “It was really beneficial. And I’m always uncertain going in whether I participate but I’m glad I did. Definitely worthwhile so a great sense of unity with *Sozo* team help me go through it and I definitely recommend it.”

Diane: “Overall very beneficial. I would strongly recommend it to anyone and would definitely do it again.”

Ruth: “I think that [the *Sozo* session] freed me up to hear God’s voice more and to know the love of the Father . . . I’m glad that I did the *Sozo*”

Mario: “I definitely saw it as valuable and I just really see it as something that I would want other people to do, for sure.”

Ramona: “The best experience of my life . . . would like to do another *Sozo* just because I want more. Nothing is really bothering me, I just want more of God.”

Helen: “It was very beneficial, it was very needed, it was very perfect timing . . . I’m very happy with the *Sozo*.”

Meghan: “It was an amazing experience I learned a lot on listening to the voice of God.”

Maryann, “It was good; it made me feel closer to God.” It should be noted that while Maryann received benefit from her *Sozo*, she did not receive the breakthrough she was seeking.

Debbie: “I’m free. I just keep thinking I’m free and I feel excited.”

Fred: “Honestly, it did not help me. If I had stuff, I definitely know that it would be reveal it. I recommend it to anybody that has trouble.” Fred was the one individual that received no discernible benefit from his *Sozo*.

Maggie: “I think I received more than I expected . . . It was such a beautiful experience. It was wholesome.”

Focus Group Data

Two focus groups were conducted with the members of the *Sozo* team who were involved in facilitating *Sozos* during the project. Of the thirteen people involved, twelve participated in at least one of the focus groups. The goal of the focus group was to evaluate the effectiveness of the *Sozo* inner healing model from the perspective of the team. What was their experience? Was *Sozo*, from their vantage point, effective?

The *Sozo* team was in unanimous agreement that the *Sozo* sessions were beneficial. Ralph commented, “I have found that in most every session the person was benefited greatly. Tony agreed and added, “I would say the large majority see fantastic breakthroughs. Unusual that someone has seemingly, I’ll use the word seemingly, has no impact from it.” In observing people at COS who had a *Sozo*, Alice noted, “It puts a hunger in them for more of God.”

One of *Sozo*’s strengths appears to be how the Trinity encounters everyone in a very personal way. Stephanie observed this in commenting, “When we have seen breakthrough, the breakthroughs have been absolutely amazing and they have been very unique.” Alice observed, “When they leave the freedom is just evident all over them.” Rachel said that when people walk into the session it as if there “Are knots in their life and through the session, it’s like an unraveling of those knots and as God gives them that answer that they need to hear, it’s like a bomb to their souls.”

The team was asked if there was any discernible pattern to the session, is there any specific way that the clients receive freedom. The consensus was that each *Sozo* was unique. Sal observed, “The path to the client getting free is sometimes obvious and very often not obvious.” Sandra agreed in stating, “I believe the tools are interchangeable.” Tony likened the session to the wind of the Holy Spirit in saying, “You don’t know where it’s going. It’s the nature of a session. You start at one place and the wind takes you somewhere else.” Rachel saw each session as unique. She observed, “I find it’s different for every person. . . . and it’s really bizarre, some of the ways that they all of a sudden get a revelation from God.”

Sal stressed the importance of the client hearing God as central to receiving their breakthrough. He observed, “Once the client starts hearing freely, his freedom is almost always inevitable. Vinny agreed stating, “Hearing probably is absolutely essential for a successful *Sozo* and for freedom. I don’t think it actually happens any other way.”

Stephanie likened the session to peeling an opinion, saying, “As the layers get peeled off, they become more tender-hearted.”

Another key to a successful session is forgiveness. The team agreed that unforgiveness often blocks the client from hearing God and receiving their breakthrough. This includes forgiving themselves. Vinny remarked, “As they forgive themselves, they realize that God has already forgiven them. Stephanie related the importance of forgiving themselves in recounting one session. “She had to forgive herself and when she began to forgive herself, she realized that God was releasing her from all the harm that she had done herself.”

Not only did *Sozo* benefit the client, the team agreed that being part of the *Sozo* ministry impacted them in a positive way. Both Ralph and Stephanie commented that they use the same *Sozo* tools on themselves. This helps them maintain their own healing. Tony and Sal commented that they never realized the amount of pain and suffering the people in their community sustained. Sal commented that he looks at people with much more compassion as a result the *Sozo*.

Sandra commented that as a result of *Sozo* she has “Come to know my Father God in a different complete light.” *Sozo* increased Maureen’s intimacy with God. Alice concurred stating, “The impact that *Sozo* has had on me is that I feel more confident in my relationship with the Holy Spirit and that I know that I’m hearing from him and that has just been mind blowing for me.”

Watching *Sozo* clients be set free has also been a major blessing for the team. Alice commented, “It just is amazing, in all the different ways Holy Spirit reaches out to people. That’s what I find so amazing.” Barbara added, “We watch as the Lord sets them free and brings restoration and there’s such a joy that comes to me in watching it happen and partnering with God, to help to facilitate that.” In a *Sozo* session, watching people be set free reminds the team of the goodness and love of God and it strengthens their own faith in His goodness. Overall the team sees *Sozo* as a blessing both for the clients and themselves.

Individual *Sozo* Data

Having reviewed each set of data as a whole, this section will review the data as it pertains to each individual *Sozo*. The data sets: pre-test and post-test surveys, interviews

and field notes were triangulated for each individual *Sozo*. In some cases, the field notes were reviewed with the members of the *Sozo* team to provide additional clarification. This provided an additional perspective into the effectiveness of the *Sozo* model.

Eleven of the twelve *Sozo* clients during the project agreed to interviews. The twelfth individual cancelled at the last minute and did not respond to requests for a reschedule. This individual's *Sozo* is not being included in this section. Her pre-test and post-test data was included as the *Sozo* team performing her *Sozo* believed the data to be a fair representation of what occurred in her session.

When compiling the data at an individual *Sozo* level, it became apparent that none of the data sets painted the complete picture. The surveys, field notes, interviews and focus group sessions all revealed different aspects of each *Sozo* session. Each set of data provided pieces to a puzzle which when pieced together provided a more complete picture. Of all the data sets, the interviews provided the richest and most vivid picture of what transpired during each session. The interviews allowed the clients to describe what happened during the session and the changes they experienced as a result of their *Sozo*. The individual *Sozo*'s are presented in chronological order.

Timothy

Table 6.5 Timothy's Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	16	24	50%
Depression	15	26	73%
God	21	24	14%
Forgiveness	22	22	0%
Total	74	96	30%

Timothy scheduled his *Sozo* at the recommendation of his wife, Diane. They had recently moved to the northeast to be involved in full time ministry. He attends church on a regular basis and has been doing so for many years. He appeared to have a relationship with God, although he later stated that some of the intimacy was lacking in his walk with Jesus.

Timothy's pre-test survey indicated that he was suffering with anxiety and depression. Scores indicated possible issues with intimacy with God and forgiveness. The field notes showed that he viewed his relationship with his earthly father as distant. This often projects on one's relationship with their heavenly Father. The field notes indicate that he was suffering from a feeling of heaviness. He had no pre-conceived ideas of what would happen in the *Sozo*. He was hoping to be free from the heaviness he was experiencing.

During the session, it was discovered that the heaviness Timothy was experiencing was the result of occult activity in his family. Timothy was completely unaware of this in his family. It is interesting to note that his wife had been suffering with a fear of the occult, even though she also was unaware that this existed in Timothy's family. The occult activity surfaced as the team and Timothy proceeded through the Four Doors, specifically the door of the occult.

When questioned about this, Timothy's response was, "I wasn't aware of the occult that came out in the meeting and I guess Jesus revealed that to me." He related that he saw what he described as "vivid pictures" identifying Free Mason activity in his family's past. In addition, he related his experience as follows:

One of the images that kept flashing out which is an image of 666 and on what poster it read lettering with 666 and basically an image of satan underneath that in

black and red. That kept coming up as well and I guess that was something that caught me by surprise. Anyway, we worked through that which is good.

He said that seeing these pictures “was shocking” as he had no idea that this existed.

As he worked through this with the team, he was freed from this activity and the heaviness he was experiencing. He remarked:

It was really through the prayer, the acknowledgment of it and then Jesus closing the door, so it was a process. That process was finished with the sealing and the burning of that door and then I felt wanted like it happened in that process. I definitely felt a freedom or a lifting all that which is, I guess, an acknowledgment.

One of the *Sozo* team members commented that, “I remember as he left, he left with such unburdened attitude.”

Despite this, Timothy said that he did not get the freedom from depression he was seeking, that he was still working through it. He felt that the symptoms of depression “might have a tail period.” This is in contrast with the post-test survey data that indicates significant improvement in depression. Two answers surfaced to this question in his interview. The first was that he found the survey difficult to answer. The other is that while he did receive a lifting of the heaviness he was facing, he did not attribute that to a lessening of the depression he was facing. When asked about this, one of the team members commented that he left the *Sozo* session with an unburdened attitude.

The field notes revealed that as a result of the *Sozo*, Timothy had a realization that God was faithful. During the focus group session, a team member commented that the breakthrough came when they went “back to the Father ladder and there was a breakthrough with Papa God when they went to a safe place where he experienced breakthrough. Open communication with the God head.” In his interview, he stated that as a result of his *Sozo*, he had regained the intimacy with Jesus that he had lost over the

past twelve months. He also experienced a breakthrough in anxiety. During the focus group session one of the team members observed that prior to the *Sozo* session he saw himself as “The man of the house, worrying about the Lord providing for them.” However, after having his breakthrough with the Father she commented that, “He just had this open communication with the Lord and the faithfulness that he is the provider.” When Timothy’s wife was interviewed she commented that during his *Sozo* he saw Jesus handing him bags full of gold. This improvement in the area of anxiety is consistent with the data in his pre-test and post-test surveys.

When asked if he felt if *Sozo* was beneficial, his response was, “It was really beneficial. And I’m always uncertain going in whether I participate but I’m glad I did. Definitely worthwhile so a great sense of unity with *Sozo* team help me go through it and I definitely recommend it.”

Diane

Table 6.6 Diane’s Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	25	26	4%
Depression	25	30	20%
God	24	30	25%
Forgiveness	15	27	80%
Total	89	113	27%

Diane’s pre-test survey indicated that she had issues with forgiveness. During the *Sozo* it became clear from the field notes that Diane had intimacy issues with the Godhead, resulting from these forgiveness issues. She suffered from feeling disconnected, and loneliness stemming from her childhood. Diane had a fear of the occult. She also felt

a lack of protection, feeling exposed. During the focus group session, a member of the team mentioned how she also had a fear of provision. During her *Sozo* session she walked through the process of forgiving all who had hurt her. Prior to this, Father God appeared distant. However, after forgiving those who hurt her, He came running to her and gave her a bear hug.

In her interview, she stated that she did not schedule the *Sozo* session to address anything specific. Going into the *Sozo*, she commented, “I really didn’t feel like there was anything I specifically was really seeking God for, I just wanted to make sure there was nothing there that was blocking whatever God wanted to do.” Diane expected the *Sozo* to be, “in-depth prayer kind of exploratory time where we would feel like ask God to reveal some things.” When asked if the session met her expectations, her response was, “It was great, everything that I could have expected and probably more, it was wonderful.”

During the *Sozo*, Diane experienced “There were areas that I thought I had dealt with and yet *Sozo* revealed that there was still a foot hold in some places so what it actually did was it freed me completely of things.” One of these areas was anger that she was unaware of. When Diane gave God her anger, He in return showed her a bowl of fruit. When she asked God what it meant, He showed her that He was giving her the fruit of the Spirit, notably love, joy and peace. She said that when she gave God her bitterness, God in turn gave her a big pile of white sugar.

What is remarkable about this is that seeing pictures was a new experience for Diane in her walk with God. She said that she was “a word person.” However, during her *Sozo* God communicated with her through images that she continued to meditate on after

her session was over. One of the stronger images helped to free Diane from fear. During the session she related that she

Had an image of this wolf running through the woods almost like it was hunting something or it was on a mission. And so when we had gone through all the doors and we had what really prayed through fear as the door was sealed up I then just in my mind had this other image of this wolf and it had done a U-turn and it had stopped running and it was just walking back the way it had come with its head down.

The result of that encounter was that her fear was replaced with joy.

Diane also received freedom from her fear of provision. During her *Sozo*, she saw a picture of a mine shaft. She then saw rail cars filled with gold but it was buried in the way. It was there but not accessible. What God showed her was that the inaccessible gold was the lie she believed. However, when she asked God for the truth, she did not receive a clear answer.

The answer came later when she discussed her *Sozo* with her husband who also had a *Sozo*. During his *Sozo*, Diane's husband had a mental picture of Jesus handing him bags full of gold. When he related that to her, she felt she now had the truth that completed the picture for her.

Diane's fear of the occult started with an Ouija board incident in her past that she felt created an open door in her life. The fear was resolved when the *Sozo* team walked her through the occult door, one of the Four Doors that is a major *Sozo* tool. During the session, Diane saw arrows with suction cups that did not stick but fell harmlessly to the ground. This picture communicated to her that the occult had no power over her.

Interestingly, Diane's husband Timothy did have occult activity in his family, of which he was unaware. During his *Sozo* session, Jesus revealed this to him. The occult activity was renounced and the door to the occult was sealed. Her fear of being

unprotected and exposed was resolved when once again, God communicated with her through an image. In this image she saw a wall with holes, which represented her exposure. Jesus then went and covered the holes, which freed her from this fear.

During her interview, Diane was asked if anything changed in her relationship with the Godhead since her *Sozo*. Her response was, “I just think it was a real affirmation a real sense of love that just regardless of what else is going on that He tightly has us.” At the end of the interview, she was asked if the *Sozo* was beneficial. She commented that, “Overall very beneficial. I would strongly recommend it to anyone and would definitely do it again.”

Ruth

Table 6.7 Ruth’s Survey Data Summary

	Pre Sozo	Post Sozo	Percent Change
Anxiety	19	24	26%
Depression	18	28	56%
God	21	27	29%
Forgiveness	21	25	19%
Total	79	104	32%

This was Ruth’s second *Sozo*, having had her first several months prior. She was the only person during the project to have had a prior *Sozo*. She is a Christian who attends church although she has a tendency to church hop. She has been married for many years and describes her husband as a loving, selfless man.

While Ruth’s pre-test data does not indicate any major issues, the scores do show room for increased freedom in all four of the measured attributes. The field notes from

the *Sozo* team indicated that she entered the session somewhat hopeless. The notes revealed that Ruth had a lengthy history of weekly counseling, heightened sensitivity to her shortcomings, and an inability to let go of memories of a life of mistreatment. The *Sozo* team agreed that when she entered the session she was unstable. Her relationship with the Trinity entering her *Sozo* session was unclear to the *Sozo* team. During her session, she expressed that she was a people pleaser, and believed that people often took advantage of her.

Ruth's interview revealed that she scheduled the *Sozo* session searching for answers looking for complete healing, although it is unclear what she meant by that statement. Ruth had been suffering with oppression, depression (she was not completely sure what it was) and had the *Sozo* in the hope that God would help her get to the bottom of it. She felt that her first *Sozo* was frustrating. She stated that she was more under control and more hopeful coming into her second *Sozo*. Ruth admitted that she has a tendency to look inward and blame herself during her struggles.

During her session, the team reported two areas of breakthrough. The first was an improvement in her relationship with Jesus as Ruth and the team worked through the Father Ladder. During this time, she told the team that emotional burdens were lifted from her. These burdens were the result of her life with an abusive father. As Ruth and the team worked through the tool, the lies were exposed and breakthrough came when they were exchanged for the truth of God's love.

Much of the session revolved around a *Sozo* tool known as the Wall. The Wall is used when a blockage appears between the client and the Trinity that does not get resolved through the Father Ladder or the Four Doors. When this occurs, the team

member may ask the client if he/she senses a wall between him/herself and a particular member of the Trinity. If the client says yes, the next step is to have the client ask that member of the Trinity if the wall is safe to come down. Typically the answer to this is “yes,” although in cases of severe wounding the response may be “no.” When the client answers no, then additional work is required before the wall can be removed.

In Ruth’s *Sozo*, she responded that the wall was safe to come down. The *Sozo* team wrote that removing the wall “Took up half the session. It was interrupted at one point to break soul ties with three individuals who showed up there. This (breaking the soul ties) became a turning point; this and also forgiving father for abuses.” As Ruth and the team proceeded, the “walls of concrete became plaster, became paper - it seemed good to us but resulted in wailing / sobbing.” Highly charged emotional responses, while not necessarily required to obtain freedom, are not atypical in a *Sozo* session. The team wrote that the result of removing the wall was that Ruth “turned a corner and began releasing newfound freedom and deliverance from a need to please others.”

In commenting on her session, Ruth replied that her *Sozo* “brought down walls from different people in my life.” She admitted that some of the bondage she felt might have been the result of how she perceived it. This is an important truth. Wounds and lies are the result of how an individual processes what has happened to them. During the *Sozo*, the team does not attempt to correct the client’s perspective of their life. Rather the session is designed to connect the client with the Trinity. It is the Trinity that reveals what the lies were, and replaces them with the truth.

Ruth commented that she did not see just one wall, but three walls. She observed, “It was about pictures. It was very demonstrative for me.” She stated, “by the time it

ended, there was a release. I still didn't know what the future held but I knew that I was at a better place." While Ruth did not believe she received complete freedom, the session was, in her words, "great progress."

Ruth admitted that she left her first *Sozo* session frustrated. So why would she schedule another session? When asked that question she responded, "I needed to realize that I had walls up and I needed to realize that they needed to come down and so this particular time, *Sozo* was probably what I needed for sure." In her experience, the *Sozo* session "Takes the baggage off our shoulders so we can breathe again. It gives courage to face simple, difficult, and all other things that we may face in this life. It also puts us in a close place with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

One of the major benefits of a *Sozo* session is that the client develops greater intimacy with the Trinity. This is key to maintaining ongoing freedom in their lives. Ruth commented that *Sozo* "really helped me to learn how to quiet myself and um, really go to God with honesty." She also remarked that *Sozo*, "opened up my ears more to hear the Holy Spirit." Ruth corroborated the survey numbers that indicated the *Sozo* resulted in less depression and anxiety in her life.

Mario

Table 6.8 Mario's Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	22	25	14%
Depression	25	28	12%
God	23	25	9%
Forgiveness	17	25	47%
Total	87	103	18%

Mario scheduled his *Sozo* for two reasons. The first because he had heard about it and believed “it was a good thing to do.” The second reason was that he wanted to recommend it to others but felt that he should try it out prior to recommending it. He is an example of someone having a *Sozo* session as a spiritual check-up. As his pre-test survey numbers indicate, he entered the session without any major issues with anxiety or depression. His numbers indicate that he saw himself as having a healthy, intimate relationship with God. The only area of potential concern evident from the pre-test survey was in the area of forgiveness. He is currently involved in full-time ministry. Entering the *Sozo*, he appeared to have a healthy relationship with God and his family. He comes from a Christian home and has a good relationship with his parents and his siblings, being the youngest of six children. Mario did not believe any areas of bondage were in his life that needed to be addressed in his *Sozo* session.

Mario’s *Sozo* went smoothly. Not many areas of severe wounding in his life were found. Despite that, the *Sozo* uncovered areas of unforgiveness, most noticeably with his brothers. Mario experienced greater intimacy with the Trinity when he forgave his brothers and renounced the lie that Jesus was like his brothers. This triggered a significant change in Mario’s relationship with Father God. After forgiving his brothers, he saw himself as a child in a red wagon. Father God was pulling the wagon as He and Mario went down to the creek to catch frogs. In his interview, Mario stated that through this experience he learned,

Father God really wants to be in a loving relationship, not a business relationship. And the Holy Spirit isn’t just around me but is within me and doesn’t come and go. It’s a constant thing. It’s like there are things that I knew but didn’t really grasp as much or knew mentally but not in my heart and stuff.

When asked about this, he concurred that prior to his *Sozo* he understood these truths conceptually, but now he understood them experientially. Mario further commented that as a result of his *Sozo* he now had greater clarity in his walk with God. He no longer feels the need to be affirmed by others, as he knows how God feels about him.

During his interview, Mario was questioned about his pre-test forgiveness scores that showed room for improvement. He remarked that during his *Sozo*, “I forgave myself for some stuff so that point is if I could forgive myself, it gives me the capacity to forgive others as well.” The *Sozo* made it easier to forgive because, in his words, “I know that the place that God has me is the place that I need to be in, that I need to let go of where He has other people and what other people think of where God has me.” With that came a confidence that he was safe in God’s hands. He remarked, “I know that there’s not really anything that people can do to hurt me, that’s outside of God’s control. He’s got my back, He’s got the best from me, so even if they do wrong me, I’m not out of His hands.” When asked if his *Sozo* was beneficial he responded, “I definitely saw it as valuable and I just really see it as something that I would want other people to do.”

Mario’s experience shows how someone can benefit from a *Sozo* even if they are not victimized by serious wounds or trauma. In Mario’s words, the *Sozo* provided “a baseline EKG.” In many ways it confirmed that he had a healthy walk with God. However, the *Sozo* also showed how a level of intimacy with God was available beyond what Mario had experienced. Many people judge their walk with God by comparing it to others that they know. In so doing, they fail to realize the depth of the love that God has

for them. As a result of his *Sozo*, Mario found an increased level of intimacy with God, and confidence in his walk.

Ramona, Meghan and Helen - The Night God Showed Up

Ramona, Meghan, and Helen's *Sozos* were three of the most dramatic experiences during the project. Meghan scheduled a children's *Sozo* for her daughter Jane who was exhibiting disturbing behavior. Jane would no longer go out with her friends, would not eat except at home, and had stopped texting on her phone, having withdrawn from most social interaction. While Ramona was justifiably concerned, her concern was exacerbated by the fact that two of her relatives had committed suicide. Seeing Jane exhibit this behavior scared her as she thought that her daughter might also attempt suicide. The women drove two hours so that Jane could have her *Sozo*.¹⁷ Ramona, along with her friends Meghan and Helen, accompanied Jane for moral support. None of them were planning to have a *Sozo*. God, however, had far more glorious plans. Ramona understood little English (her interview was conducted through an interpreter). While she had communicated with Joanie Wattoff, the *Sozo* ministry leader, through email, the language barrier led Joanie to believe that Ramona was coming with her daughter Jane and one other woman and that all three were having *Sozos*.

The night the ladies arrived at the church was an unusually chaotic night at COS. Members of the church were busy loading boxes full of shoeboxes into trucks for Operation Christmas Child (OCC), a ministry of Samaritan's Purse. COS is a regional

¹⁷ While Jane did receive significant help, her *Sozo* was not included in the project. The surveys were not developed for children and were not age appropriate. Both the survey process and the interview could have been stressful for Jane and therefore might have been harmful. Children's *Sozo*'s, while similar are needfully simpler and shorter in length than adult *Sozo*'s. While Jane's *Sozo* was successful, it was not considered applicable for this project.

collection center for OCC. People were busy building sets for the upcoming Christmas play. Others were rehearsing for the play. That night was also intercessory prayer night at the church. Normally Joanie takes pains to set the atmosphere prior to the *Sozo*. She and the *Sozo* team arrive early to pray and worship God prior to the start of the sessions. That night, none of that happened.

When the women arrived with Jane, they were each handed a clipboard with the *Sozo* registration form and the pre-test survey. Not knowing the procedure, they filled out the paperwork. Jane and the three ladies all had *Sozos* that night with Jane receiving significant help. Ramona's *Sozo* followed her daughter's. Stephanie¹⁸ conducted Ramona's session with a Sandra who served as translator for Stephanie and Ramona.

Ramona

Table 6.9 Ramona's Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	26	29	12%
Depression	19	30	58%
God	30	30	0%
Forgiveness	26	30	15%
Total	101	119	18%

Ramona had no preconceived ideas as to what to expect, as she had not planned on having a *Sozo*. She came for what she called, "spiritual cleansing for her daughter." Ramona is a Christian and is in fellowship with other believers. Her pre-test numbers did

¹⁸ As with the *Sozo* clients, the names of the *Sozo* team members have been changed to preserve anonymity

not reflect her true level of anxiety. This could possibly be attributed to her limited understanding of English (she needed help from her daughter in answering the questions).

The Sozo team described Ramona's *Sozo* as unusual. The team stated, "The encounter she had was amazing and very easy. It only took one hour." At the start of the *Sozo*, it was necessary for Sandra, who was the second chair, to translate. However, that changed as the *Sozo* continued. Ramona commented during her interview (through an interpreter), "While she was there she understood perfectly she doesn't understand why but everything they were saying she understood." This was truly supernatural.

As Ramona walked through forgiving those who had hurt her, the Holy Spirit took over. Supernatural laughter broke out and all three people in the room (Ramona and the two members of the *Sozo* team) were overcome with laughter. As the laughter came, the worry and anxiety she had been carrying left. In its place was a sense of peace, rest, and joy. In commenting about this experience, Ramona commented she "felt like she had slept for six hours, like a spa."

The *Sozo* progressed with the *Sozo* team helping Ramona continue to walk through forgiveness. Additional breakthrough came as they worked through the door of fear, one of the Four Doors. As the *Sozo* was ending, the team encouraged Ramona to see herself in a safe place. As she did that, God gave her a vision. Ramona was in a castle dressed in a beautiful gown. The gown was royal blue and gold. She then saw many people, and tables. People were all around her when someone (she does not know who) put a crown on her head. When the placed the crown on her head, she felt it go through her spirit. As she stood in that place, Papa God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit all picked her out of the entire group of people to dance.

This encounter was more than a vision; it became a full experience. At that point, Ramona stood up and started dancing in the room, holding the outside of her dress up as if it was a gown. The *Sozo* team moved chairs out of the way to make room and watched her dance around the room with each member of the Trinity. When she was done, she said it was as if she woke up and was back in the *Sozo* room.

This type of encounter was a new experience both for Ramona and the team. Ramona remarked that prior to that night she had never experienced the presence of God. When asked about the effect of the *Sozo*, she simply remarked, “I am very happy.” During her interview she said several times that the *Sozo* was, “the best experience of my life.” Since the *Sozo*, Ramona is “always worshipping, always praying. She is in the spirit from the time she wakes up until she goes to sleep.” She received so much joy from the experience that “There is no going back.”

Ramona’s *Sozo* not only removed the burdens, the heaviness from her life, it has completely changed her perspective towards her walk with God. Prior to the *Sozo*, she had never experienced the presence of God. During her interview she said that in her next *Sozo* perhaps she will “actually go to heaven and sit on the throne with Jesus and God.”

Not all *Sozos* are as spectacular as Ramona’s. However all *Sozos* are aimed at removing wounds and lies that block intimacy with the Trinity. In Ramona’s case, the Father chose to meet with her in a dramatic way. The different, unique ways that God meets with His children is a testimony to His goodness and His love for mankind.

Meghan

Table 6.10 Meghan’s Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	15	21	40%
Depression	19	22	16%
God	20	23	15%
Forgiveness	17	20	18%
Total	71	86	21%

Meghan accompanied Ramona and Helen to COS to support Ramona’s daughter, Jane. Like the other women, she was not planning on having a *Sozo* and went into her session with no preconceived ideas. Her pre-test survey data showed that she was suffering from anxiety and unforgiveness. Her numbers for depression and intimacy with God were above the mean but still showed room for improvement. The notes from the *Sozo* team indicated that she was a believer and in fellowship with other believers. The team described her relationship with God as “getting there.”

At the beginning of the *Sozo*, Meghan was unable to connect with the Trinity. When asked what she saw, felt or heard during the *Sozo* process, her response was that she saw black. Then a member of the team suggested that she listen with her heart, rather than her head. That one suggestion, combined with forgiving those who had hurt her, enabled her to interact with the Trinity. In the words of a team member, when she began to listen with her heart, “the floodgates opened.”

As the *Sozo* continued Meghan started to experience pain in her ears. In response, a team member asked her if occult activity was in her past. She had in fact been baptized into the occult. As they renounced the occult activity, she received freedom.

The team member then asked if she desired to be filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues. Unbeknownst to the team member, this was something Meghan had desired for years but was never able to attain. The team members prayed for her and she began speaking in tongues. This was a major breakthrough for Meghan. When her *Sozo* was done she came out of the room beaming with joy.

In addition to the freedom from the occult, Meghan received freedom from anger. She commented that prior to the *Sozo* she had been battling her temper. She commented,

I tend to get irate fast and one of the things that has changed a lot since that day . . . [speaking about the *Sozo*] I am able to control myself a little bit more and go back and just remember that I gave the Lord that part of me and work from there.

This happened during the middle of the session. Along with the freedom from anger, Meghan received peace that she had not experienced. She said that after the *Sozo*, Meghan went out to eat with Ramona, Helen and Jane, and “it got to a point where I couldn’t even stop laughing.” Meghan was excited about her experience commenting, “It was an amazing experience I learned a lot about listening to the voice of God.”

Despite all that happened, Meghan’s post-test survey numbers showed a steady but non-dramatic increase. Her anxiety scores improved 40%. The other attributes all improved between 15% and 20%. This is a nice improvement but given her *Sozo* experience one might have expected a bigger change. During the interview, Meghan was asked about this. Despite all that happened she said that intimacy with God did not change much but that she was no longer depressed. She is continuing to hear God with

her heart. She summed up her *Sozo* by remarking, “It was an eight on a scale of one to ten.”

Helen

Table 6.11 Helen’s Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	17	30	76%
Depression	19	30	58%
God	24	30	25%
Forgiveness	14	30	114%
Total	74	120	62%

Helen was the third member of the group that came that night to support Jane’s *Sozo*. As with the other two women, she was not planning to have a *Sozo*. She was a believer who had just recently returned to church. She appeared to have a healthy relationship with God. Prior to the *Sozo*, Helen appeared composed, well-spoken, and excited about what God was doing in her life. She was attending college and was optimistic about her future. Her pre-test survey scores however indicated some potential struggles. Her scores for anxiety and forgiveness were both below the median. Her score for depression was nineteen, just above the median of eighteen. Her intimacy with God scores indicated a healthy relationship with God.

The *Sozo* began with Helen seeing Father God as a bright light. Early in the session, as the team walked Helen through the Father Ladder, she became aware of people she needed to forgive. She did not realize that these people in her past still affected her. However, as she forgave them she observed, “Little by little I was getting

free and I was getting more light.” Despite this, one area remained where she found it difficult to forgive. In recounting her struggle she remarked, “It was really hard to me to forgive what happened there and I was being honest that I didn’t want to forgive them, I was fighting it, but once I learned how to just give it to God everything started feeling better.”

As the *Sozo* continued, Helen continued to experience greater freedom. Helen and the team identified a generational curse in her past. They broke the curse, which brought additional freedom. According to one team member, “We were having what I would call a textbook *Sozo*.” The team then moved to the door of sexual sin. Helen continued to participate. It was at that point that the team began to lead Helen in breaking soul ties.

A soul tie is an emotional connection between two people. Unholy soul ties happen when a sinful sexual relationship such as adultery or sex outside of marriage exists. When the relationship ends, in some cases this results in a type of fragmentation where one part of a person becomes attached to another. In order for the person to become whole, they must sever any unholy soul ties. The team sensed that for Helen to be set free, it was necessary to break soul ties that were formed as a result of sexual sin. As the team walked Helen through the breaking of soul ties, the mood in the room shifted. Helen went from cooperative to unresponsive.

Rachel, who was conducting the *Sozo* session as first chair, recalls what happened when they began to break soul ties:

That is when she shut down. Her eyelids were fluttering a little and she kept her eyes closed and was unresponsive. I asked her if she was okay and some other things and no response. After a time of silence and her being unresponsive, we began to try to take authority over it. What really started working was when Tony [who was the second chair] commanded it to come out and started saying come out in the name of Jesus. Several times Tony would say “the Blood of Jesus” and

he would say come out and she would shake her head no and he would say yes you will come out. At one point she turned her back to him in the swivel chair and he said you can't get away from Jesus. We told her to take authority over it and we told her it would be great if you could say the name of Jesus.

She bent over and cried once and she kind of came out of it. She asked me if we were done. I said we aren't holding you here but we can continue if you want. She asked for paper and a pen and she handed a note to me that said don't listen to me, I'm lying. [See figure 6.1] So we asked to her say the name of Jesus and she was holding her chest and saying it hurts and she also cried and said help me. Tony was saying it's okay, you're doing good and asking her to say Jesus is Lord. Finally she was able to say it.

So then we forgave the guy again and broke the soul tie again and this time she was able to say it no problem. So we went to seal the door and she couldn't do it so I asked if Jesus would help her and he gave her a key. She was afraid to use the key so again I talked her into using it and the door went away.

Helen, described the experience as follows:

I'm repeating the prayer with her [to break soul ties] and I couldn't hear her anymore, I couldn't finish the prayer because I felt like I was leaving my body, I couldn't see everything when my eyes were closed, but I could see the room, I could see what they were doing, I could see everything that's happening and I could no longer speak.

I had no control of my body and deep down I was crying and I'm screaming for help. I'm trying to say Jesus' name and I couldn't say his name at all and I'm there trying to fight it and I'm listening. They are talking to me "Helen you are bigger, you are stronger than this, you have God, you have Jesus Christ" and I'm there "yes I know," but I couldn't do anything about it.

The song "Break every Chain" was just playing in my mind over and over, I don't know why. That was all I kept hearing: break every chain, break every chain and finally after they kept praying over and over and I was able to speak and I opened my eyes and then again I felt like I left my body, but my eyes are open this time and they are talking to me and it's not me. I'm trying to tell them it's not me and I finally asked them for a piece of paper and I just write something.

I wrote to them and it was me saying, "Don't listen to what I am saying," because it wasn't me and I don't know if they knew that or not and I didn't want to say everything done to me. I wanted to be me, I don't want it to be anything else. I don't know if this makes sense?

I remember at one point I looked at her [Rachel] and I cried and I wanted her to help me to keep praying and don't believe this is me. So after that when they prayed I felt good and I felt free again, but I told them I don't know what happened. This happens a lot and I'm tired of that happening to me, I don't want this to happen to me anymore.

What happened was that Helen could no longer speak as she was being controlled by a demon. When she wrote on the paper, "Don't listen to what I am saying," it was

Helen crying for help. Tony, who was in the session as the second chair recounts the deliverance:

We just commanded the thing to go to release her. The thing that seemed to me the key that was really bothering the demon was we just spoke about the blood of Jesus. I'm saying the blood of Jesus is against you, the blood of Jesus, the blood of Jesus and it [the demon] was getting more and more agitated and ultimately they left. Praise the Lord.

Eventually, the demon left and Helen was set free. In her interview she commented that, "I feel light, there is nothing weighing me down." As a result of the *Sozo*, Helen is enjoying her relationship with God. She explained,

I talk to God more now it's more like a relationship. I just don't talk to him when I pray. I just talk to Him now . . . I can't believe what happened to me. I joke around with him. I depend on him more now not just as God as like my Father, my best friend.

In her interview, Helen was excited that she hears His voice much more clearly than before the *Sozo*. As a result of her *Sozo*, she "realizes that's really Him talking to me." Not only does Helen hear the voice of God more clearly, the *Sozo* has drastically altered how she views God and her understanding of what God thinks of her. She recounts that later in the *Sozo* session, following her deliverance:

There was a point when they [the *Sozo* team] asked me to ask God how he sees me and He showed me, a trophy in a glass trophy case and it was so big and it was so clean and beautiful and sparkly and I'm like oh, my God and I'm I felt conceited or oh, my God no that can't be true. But I realized that's really how He sees me and that amazes me till this day that's just amazing like no guy or no person in this world would ever say that it's just so amazing.

At the beginning of her session, when Helen was asked to picture Father God, all she saw was a bright light. At the end of her session, the team once again asked Helen to picture the Father. This time she recounts,

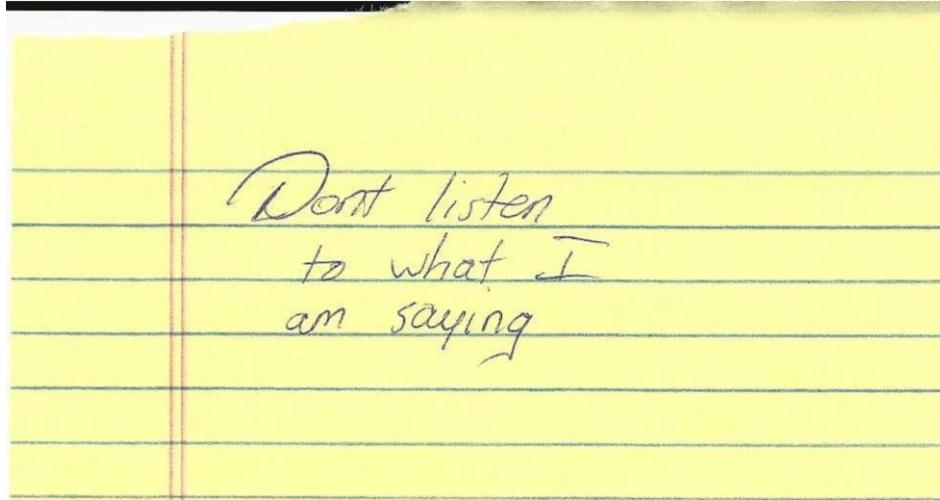
I saw a warm light it was very pleasing and it was very relaxing and very peaceful and I could see arms like these arms stretching out like wide open like I felt like he was saying he is here I'm here like come I'm right here.

And I felt so good like my spirit just felt so good and relaxed and like very pleasing it was like the perfect feeling I felt it was a perfect feeling I can't really describe in any other way that's how I felt."

When asked how beneficial her *Sozo* was, she responded, "It was very beneficial, it was very needed, it was very perfect timing . . . everything was perfect, it was perfect."

Helen's post-test survey scores reflect the magnitude of the transformation as a result of her session. She came into the session carrying unforgiveness, anxiety and demonic oppression. When she left the session she was free from all those weights.

Figure 6.1: Copy of the note Helen wrote during her session



MaryAnn

Table 6.12 MaryAnn's Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	19	23	21%
Depression	21	21	0%
God	25	27	8%
Forgiveness	24	23	-4%
Total	89	94	6%

MaryAnn's pre-test survey numbers indicated that while she was not suffering from extreme emotional problems she was not experiencing total freedom. MaryAnn was seeking for "more of God" and she scheduled her *Sozo* after "Hearing so many people saying that they hear from God I thought something was blocking me from just hearing the voice of God." Having heard from other people that *Sozo* was amazing she was hoping to achieve breakthrough in hearing God. MaryAnn was active in her local church and was in fellowship with other believers.

MaryAnn grew up in a very violent area. Despite that she was free from any childhood trauma. She had loving parents and always felt protected and cared for. In reviewing that part of her life, she observed, "God was really covering me maybe since birth." Despite that, the *Sozo* revealed areas of fear in her life that were addressed at the fear door. After working through the fear, MaryAnn experienced greater intimacy with Jesus. MaryAnn felt that her session was "a confirmation of God's love for me. He reminded me of all these years when He was right there and I knew that." As a result of the *Sozo*, she is more aware of God's presence with her as she goes through the day. She observed, "When I came to my *Sozo* I was in a place where I had so much going on. So when I left I felt that peace and it's still with me."

Despite this MaryAnn did not experience any significant breakthrough during her *Sozo* session. The *Sozo* team walked MaryAnn through the Father Ladder and the Four Doors, the two basic tools of a *Sozo* session. While MaryAnn did see herself cuddling with Father it was not a major revelation for her.

It is unclear as to why her *Sozo* session was not more impactful. One possibility is that she suffered from a performance mindset, a belief that she needed to do more for God. During her interview she commented that she still was not witnessing enough. While that is a possibility and often a contributing factor, it would be presumptuous to assume that was the answer.

Another factor was that this was not the first time MaryAnn had participated in inner healing. She had participated in a women's Bible study focused on inner healing for many months. Many of the forgiveness issues that are typically encountered in a *Sozo* were already addressed in the Bible study. While much of what MaryAnn learned in that study was of value it did not lead her into complete freedom.

Debbie

Table 6.13 Debbie's Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	24	26	8%
Depression	27	29	7%
God	26	26	0%
Forgiveness	30	30	0%
Total	107	111	4%

Debbie scheduled her *Sozo* session hoping she would receive a word from God regarding His purpose for her. She commented, “I wanted to discern God’s will for my life, God’s purpose or desire for the ministry or a gift or area He’d like to use me in.” She was unaware of any emotional issues in her life. She has been a believer for many years and is in fellowship with other believers. As her pre-test survey scores indicated she did not believe she was suffering from any depression or anxiety. She did not sense any unforgiveness in her life and she believed she was enjoying an intimate, healthy relationship with God. She did not expect to find anything plaguing her nor did she sense she needed any additional freedom.

The session began, like most *Sozos* at COS with the Father Ladder. When asked to picture Father God, all Debbie could see was an outline. Alice, the *Sozo* team member sitting first chair, then led Debbie through forgiveness for her earthly father. Typically, when someone is not achieving intimacy with Father God it is because they did not have intimacy with their earthly father and they project their perception of their earthly father onto Father God. However, in this case, forgiving her earthly father did not bring additional intimacy between Debbie and Father God. Alice then asked her if she had any other father figures in her life. As Debbie sat quietly, the Holy Spirit revealed someone else from her past that she needed to forgive. As Debbie continued to forgive those the Holy Spirit brought to her remembrance, her intimacy with the Trinity changed. Debbie went from seeing Father God as an outline to sitting in His lap. Her intimacy with Jesus changed from seeing Him in the distance to being right next to her.

Debbie was surprised by the amount of forgiveness she experienced in her session. Her pre-test survey scores indicate that she did not realize she had any unforgiveness. When asked about it she replied,

I think the one with my relative surprised me . . . I think when we started pin pointing, I didn't expect his name to come up although it was very clear that there were incidences and at that point in my life where those words were hurtful. But I guess I just brushed that off as I was a little child, naturally I would have been offended or hurt by those little words and maybe just didn't realize the weight or significant or impact they had on my life.

Debbie was not intentionally suppressing unforgiveness or hurt feelings. Instead, she was simply trying to cope with what she thought were the normal hurts that life brings. She did not realize those hurts remained, nor did she appreciate how they were affecting her. One of the themes that have emerged from the *Sozo* project is how God reveals hours, wounds, lies in individual's lives that have gone undetected. As He reveals them and they are addressed, healing and freedom result.

As the *Sozo* progressed, God spoke to Debbie and told her, "It's OK to make a mistake." This was a huge breakthrough for Debbie. She had always been responsible but she labored under the burden of being "the responsible one." Her pre-test scores for anxiety gave no indication of the stress she was experiencing. It was not until God spoke to her that she realized that she could live free from the stress that had plagued her.

The freedom that Debbie found continued to increase. In her interview, approximately one week after the *Sozo*, she commented, "I feel released, feel free. It's OK, I don't have to be afraid of making mistakes, I'm free, I'm excited." Her *Sozo* session completely changed her perspective. Instead of being focused on what God wanted her to do, she was enjoying being his daughter. She recounted, "Yesterday I took a walk along the shoreline. I heard the word 'twirl'. I started to twirl around. This was a carryover from

the *Sozo*. I felt very excited. I probably wouldn't have done that prior to the *Sozo*." She went on to say, "I got rid of the standard, I'm a little child now."

Debbie came into the *Sozo* looking for a word on what God wanted her to do. She left the *Sozo*, with a better understanding of who she was, who God was and what it meant to be His daughter. She described the transformation as, "I expected a word of knowledge. What I got was deeper understanding of where I've been, a greater understanding of myself . . . I wanted to know what God wanted me to do but He simply wants me to be." When asked about the benefits of her session, she replied, "The *Sozo* was most definitely beneficial. I'm being a little child playing in the sandbox."

Fred

Table 6.14 Fred's Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	26	26	0%
Depression	27	29	7%
God	27	28	4%
Forgiveness	25	28	12%
Total	105	111	6%

Fred's pre-test survey numbers indicated he was enjoying a healthy relationship with God having no issues with depression, unforgiveness or anxiety. He is a committed Christian and is in fellowship with other believers. He scheduled the *Sozo* to ensure that nothing that was hindering his relationship with God.

Fred's *Sozo* was uneventful. The team took him through the Father Ladder and the Four Doors and did not uncover any unforgiveness, wounds or open doors. While no

hindrances were found, Fred did not have any intimate interaction with any members of the Trinity. One of the main benefits of *Sozo* is the removal of wounds and lies that hinder relationships with the Trinity. Fred's *Sozo* was unusual in that no major blockages were uncovered, yet the desired intimacy with God did not occur.

Fred was not surprised no hindrances were found as he makes a point of walking in forgiveness as part of his walk with God. In his interview, Fred felt the *Sozo* was confirmation that, "everything was fine." He did not receive the breakthrough in hearing God that he was seeking. Neither Fred, nor the *Sozo* team knew why that did not happen. He believes that *Sozo* would have uncovered any hindrances or unforgiveness had they existed. Fred's *Sozo* session did not provide a significant benefit to him.

Maggie

Table 6.15 Maggie's Survey Data Summary

	Pre <i>Sozo</i>	Post <i>Sozo</i>	Percent Change
Anxiety	7	30	329%
Depression	6	30	400%
God	15	30	100%
Forgiveness	19	30	58%
Total	47	120	155%

Maggie scheduled her *Sozo* at the recommendation of a friend. She was struggling with depression and was hoping to find relief. Her pre-test survey numbers indicated severe anxiety and depression. While she had been a Christian for approximately fifteen years, the pre-test survey indicates that she did not have a close relationship with God. Her numbers for forgiveness were just above the median.

Maggie was not sure what to expect from her session. She thought it would be, in her words, “spiritual deliverance or healing.” She admitted that she did not know how that would look. She scheduled her *Sozo* in the hope that she would “break out of this depression that seems to have a really strong hold on me.” Stephanie, one of the *Sozo* team members, recalls that Maggie “was desperate. She wanted help. “

Maggie had a history of severe depression. She had suffered abuse and mistreatment during her life. She had also gone through a painful divorce. She had been in and out of therapy for years in an attempt to get free. In therapy she had learned to cope by using positive self-talk. In recounting her battles she related that, “I would have to battle on a daily basis, twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week with that.” The negativity was a constant battle in her life.

During her *Sozo*, the team walked Maggie through the process of forgiving those who had mistreated her. The *Sozo* progressed to the Fear Door. At this point Maggie saw a maze. She commented that the maze represented hopelessness, a feeling of being trapped, of not being able to escape her dilemma. She then saw Father God take a wrecking ball and annihilate the maze. The maze, which had high concrete walls, was completely cleared. With that, she was free from hopelessness.

The *Sozo* progressed to self-hatred, one of the attributes that is often addressed at the fear door. Maggie recounts the story: “I saw myself trying to climb up out of it. It was a really dark, wet, deep well. I'm desperately trying to climb out of it. My fingernails were broken off. Bloody, desperate, a lot of rage, Despair, hopelessness, anger. A lot of bad stuff.”

While in the well, a *Sozo* team member suggested that she ask Jesus for a flashlight. She then saw the well as a hidden place. Maggie is not sure how she got out of the well. She does recall that God gave her a new heart and she was able to forgive herself. When she forgave herself, she was out of the well. Once she was out of the well she was free from the self-hatred and condemnation that had plagued her.

During one of the focus group sessions, Stephanie recounts what she witnessed during Maggie's *Sozo*:

She went through incredible anxiety to incredible breakthrough. At the end of the *Sozo* we were sitting there for ten to fifteen minutes not saying a word because she was in the presence of Father God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. It was the most amazing thing and she didn't want to leave because she knew where she was. She was protected and she was loved and [free from] all of the nasty divorce and all the abuse that she had experienced. She was able to surrender that, give that over to God and God was able to heal her. It was an amazing transformation and it was from unchurched person.

Maggie concurs with what Stephanie witnessed. Prior to her *Sozo* she battled negativity on a daily basis using positive self-talk as a coping mechanism. Since the *Sozo* she observes, "I don't have those intense negative thoughts. That's gone. So that's the clear difference for me. I'm not battling that negativity, those negative thinking, or that self-hatred."

The imagery she experienced in the *Sozo* has changed her perspective. Prior to the *Sozo* she believed that what had happened to her was her fault. Having experienced God's love in such a dramatic manner she explains, "In this visual, God's imagery kind of thing in therapy, I finally, deeply was set free. And I walked home for weeks going, "I am innocent. Oh, my gosh, I'm innocent." When asked about the post-test survey numbers she validated that the numbers were accurate and that the change the dramatic change indicated by the survey numbers was accurate.

Pastoral Perspective on *Sozo*

Nicholas Seeberger, Senior Pastor at COS was asked what the impact of *Sozo* has been on him and the church. Here are his comments to specific questions he was asked:

1. From your perspective, how has *Sozo* impacted the people at COS who have had a *Sozo*?

The greatest impact *Sozo* has had on people at COS is the freedom and deliverance which occurs as a result of inviting people to hear and respond to the voice of God to them and in them. In my opinion this sets the ministry apart from other forms of help such as counseling or prophetic ministry. Whereas a good counselor may provide insight and bring people to self-awareness by asking the right questions, *Sozo* brings people to a place where they directly encounter God's voice. Likewise a prophetic word may bring clarity or confirmation. But when people hear God's voice directly through the tools used in *Sozo*, they own it. A secondary benefit is discovering the truth and uncovering misbeliefs (lies). *Sozo-ed* people are joyful people. Wounds, bondage, lies are used by the enemy to constrict, manipulate and imprison. *Sozo-ed* people are more confident, less afraid.

2. How has *Sozo* impacted the church as a whole?

Impact occurs over time. Since the *Sozo* training and the launch of the ministry at Church on the Sound, people have become familiar with the word itself and its application. For example prior to *Sozo*, salvation would have been considered an event, initiated by a prayer and marked in time. However, through *Sozo* we have come to understand that there is an ongoing dimension, which involves freedom from bondage, healing from wounds, deliverance from discovering the truth. As more people from the congregation participate and share about the freedom they have received through *Sozo*, I believe that it will become part of the culture at COS.

Yes, as with most things new, there has been some pushback. This is mainly due to ignorance; not understanding the need, the Scriptural basis, or the scope and benefit of *Sozo*. The impact of those who have been through a *Sozo* session has been life changing. It's as if the Holy Spirit put pieces of a puzzle in place that had been missing for years.

3. From your perspective, how has *Sozo* impacted the *Sozo* team?

Sozo has been a faith booster for team members. The feedback from their involvement is consistently one of amazement. While the same tools are used, no two sessions are alike. The other dynamic that has developed over time is the concept of "team." It's working together, whether in first, second or third chair.

4. How has *Sozo* impacted you as Pastor?

Sozo has dramatically reduced my counseling load. Many times after an initial session, I am able to recommend that the individual sign up for a *Sozo* session. The Holy Spirit is a great counselor! *Sozo* has also provided another expression of ministry involvement. People who had not found a place to serve have been equipped and are now ministering through *Sozo*. Personally, *Sozo* has sensitized me to God's voice in guiding people to respond during a worship service. (A participant recently commented on how she felt I was facilitating a *Sozo* as a response to the message). I have also become much more aware of "getting slimed" by the enemy. One facet of the *Sozo* training is to provide an awareness of one of the enemy's tactics.

5. Overall has *Sozo* been beneficial to COS? Would you recommend it to other pastors?

Through the years I have participated in a number of inner healing models – including the Bondage Breaker, Cleansing School, Anne White's Clergy Prayer School, Possess the Land (Carol Thompson), and Ancient Paths. *Sozo* has been highly effective. Why? Done right, (as a discipleship tool), people can learn how to walk in freedom, not just get a freedom "fix". And they can use the tools to *Sozo* themselves. Thus, there is not an unhealthy dependence on a person (counselor) or a group, or even on a method. As I see it, at the core of *Sozo* is the voice of Father God, the awareness of the ongoing presence of Jesus and the Spirit of Truth; all working together to bring clarity to the past, purpose in the present and hope for the future. I have and will continue to recommend it to other pastors.

Nicholas does not participate as a member of the *Sozo* team. His experience does reflect the perspective of a pastor observing the impact of *Sozo* on the Sozo team, COS members who have had *Sozos* and on the church as a whole. He is a strong proponent of the ministry within COS.

Conclusions

The survey data showed that the clients achieved an overall improvement of 28.6% for the four attributes measured. Those client attributes that were below the median prior

to the *Sozo* saw a benefit of 89.4%. This data strongly indicates that *Sozo* is an effective inner healing model.

The interviews not only corroborated these findings; they enhanced them. The interviews indicated that in some cases, the pre-test surveys overstated the emotional health of the client. This means that the percent change is in some cases understated.

Focus group sessions showed that the *Sozo* team believes that breakthroughs happen in the great majority of the sessions. This agrees with the survey and the interview data. The focus groups also highlighted the benefit of *Sozo* on the *Sozo* team.

When the data was triangulated on an individual basis, the results were similar. Eleven of the twelve clients agreed to interviews. Of these eleven, nine or 81.8% had what can be described as significant breakthroughs in inner healing. One of the eleven received a slight benefit. One client's *Sozo* session produced no perceived improvement.

Nicholas's pastoral perspective confirms the results of the data. He has seen that *Sozo* has had a positive effect on the *Sozo* team and on his church members who have participated. He observes that it has brought freedom to many and recommends it to other pastors.

The data strongly suggests that *Sozo* is an effective method. Why is it so effective? *Sozo* works because it connects the client to a God who earnestly desires to see His children set free. In Exodus 15:26, God refers to Himself as Jehovah-Rapha, the God who heals. Healing is in His very nature. When a wounded person encounters Jehovah-Rapha, freedom is the result.

The power of *Sozo* lies in the fact that God Himself is involved in the process, identifying wounds and lies. In a *Sozo* session, it is the Trinity that is bringing healing to the client. In this process, intimacy is formed between the client and the Trinity.

The key element to *Sozo* is that it re-establishes intimacy between the client and the Trinity. The result of sin in the Garden of Eden was that Adam and Eve hid themselves from God (Ge 3:8). When sin entered, the intimacy that existed between God and humankind was severed. Jesus came to restore that relationship (Jn 3:16) so that we may once again know God (Jn 17:3), not merely know about Him. That is why the ministry of the New Testament Church is a ministry of reconciliation (2Co 5:19). Through the cross, men and women can once again brought into intimacy with God. *Sozo* aids in the reconciliation process as it rids individuals of the wounds and lies that have hindered their fellowship with the Trinity. As intimacy is restored, healing results. Jon Ruthven writes that the “primal biblical experience” is the “New Covenant Spirit that causes us to hear and know God, resulting in us being empowered to fulfill His word of commission.”¹⁹ *Sozo* brings the client into that place of hearing and knowing God and thus empowers him/her to walk in New Covenant truth and power.

Lessons Learned

While the project was successful, room for improvement remains. Many of the survey questions were taken from established surveys. This provided a level of confidence that the questions were clear and valid for desired purpose. The surveys were tested on a group of people prior to beginning the project. The group agreed that the

¹⁹ Jon Mark Ruthven, *What's Wrong with Protestant Theology? Tradition Vs. Biblical Emphasis* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2013), 299-300.

questions were clear and the survey was not difficult to complete. Despite that, some of the clients encountered difficulty with the survey. Some of the questions were not clear to the clients. Some of this was a language problem as some of the clients were not fluent in English. Others struggled in that they interpreted the questions incorrectly. One mistake in testing the surveys was that most of the test subjects were familiar with *Sozo*. In the future, it would be better to test the surveys with a group unfamiliar with *Sozo*.

Field notes were filled out by the second chair using a form that was designed and approved by the team. Despite this, some of the field notes were excellent and some were lacking in detail. In general, the quality of the field notes improved during the course of the project. In the future, it would have been beneficial to use the field notes for a period of time prior to starting the project. While the form may not have changed, the team would have become more proficient in using it.

Ideally, it would have been beneficial to run a pilot program for a month prior to starting the project. This would have allowed the team to revise questions, enhance the forms and be more familiar with recording relevant data. This fine tuning would have enhanced the project.

Future Studies

Sozo is an effective inner healing model in bringing inner healing to individuals. How effective is it in helping individuals to stay free? What other factors influence an individual's ability to maintain their freedom? Are some people more disposed to freedom, while others have more of a struggle maintaining their breakthrough?

A study identifying these factors would be valuable. This would require a longer time frame, over several months. It would require understanding many of the variables involved. The results of such a study could be used to help people steward the freedom that they gained in their *Sozo* session.

As a means of providing a view into long term effectiveness, an interview was done with one client two months after their *Sozo* session. While no conclusions should be drawn from one interview, it does provide a glimpse of the potential long term benefits from *Sozo*. Further studies would help to corroborate the findings.

Mary had her *Sozo* two months prior to the start of the project. While survey data is not available, an interview was done to provide insight into whether the freedom she was still experiencing the same freedom two months after her *Sozo*. Her responses indicate that as a result of her *Sozo* she is experiencing increasing freedom and joy in her Christian walk.

Mary had endured domestic abuse. She mentioned that, that like many who have suffered domestic abuse, she had a tendency to blame herself. She had prayed about it in the past and had received a measure of freedom. She had not gone through counseling or other inner healing methods. Through her *Sozo*, she was set free.

Her freedom came when she, “got seeing the vision of Him being there protecting me. I still have the visions of just us playing in the garden.” As a result of the *Sozo*, she is not as easily offended.

Like many, Mary is hearing from God and seeing more visions after her *Sozo*. She says that her relationship with God is stronger. She now realizes that God had been

speaking to her all the time but she thought it was her voice. She recounts how God showed her through a vision a physical condition her mom was experiencing:

The other day, I had the vision of reproductive system of a woman. God told me you have to pray because somebody is sick. I prayed quietly, then 3 days later, my mom call calls and she say I have to go through a doctor in my house, a girl in an ovary or something. I said "Don't worry about that. I already prayed for it." She was like "oh my God. I can't believe that." I was like "Don't worry."

Mary was also freed from the guilt of having an abortion. As a believer she felt she should have known better. Through the *Sozo* she was able to forgive herself and leave that painful event in the past.

Is Mary's story typical or the exception? Do all people who find freedom through *Sozo* stay free or do some lose that freedom? What factors influence the long-term effectiveness of *Sozo*. A long-term study could be used to identify factors that help individuals maintain their freedom. From this, a long-term wellness program could be developed.

An additional study that could be undertaken would be to include *Sozo* as part of an overall wellness model. The tie between emotional issues and physical healing has been well established. Medical professionals agree that stress is a major contributor to illness. Craig Miller points out that feelings of unworthiness, unbelief, fear and doubt can all block an individual to receiving divine healing.²⁰ Some physical healing ministries do look for emotional issues when receiving of physical healing in response to prayer appears to be blocked. However, in most cases, the ministries of physical healing and inner healing are still kept separate. Would there be a benefit to a program that integrates

²⁰ Randy Clark and Craig Miller, *Finding Victory When Healing Doesn't Happen*, (Mechanicsburg, PA: Apostolic Network of Global Awakening, 2015), 26.

the two and better addresses the integrated nature of man? This would be an ambitious project, as it would require the development of the wellness program. The program would then have to be launched and tested. The client base should include those who have had difficulty receiving healing (physical or emotional) through traditional Christian healing ministries as part of the population. The results could then be studied to analyze the effectiveness of the integrated model.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY FORMS

Sozo Registration Form and Pre-Test Survey



!

Sozo!Registration!Form!

!

!

Name:!!_____!Date:!!_____!

Address:!!_____!

City:!!_____!State:!!_____!Zip:!!_____!

Phone!Number:!(_____)!____G____!Cell!Number:!(_____)!____G____!

Email!address:!_____!

Church!Attending:!_____!

Why did you schedule a Sozo?!!_____!

Who referred you to the Sozo Ministry?!!_____!

Were you able to fast or pray before your Sozo? Yes ____! No ____! !

There is no required fee for Sozo ministry. However, donations in response to the ministry time spent are appreciated. Please make all donations payable to Church on the Sound.!

!

We recommend you share with someone you trust what happened during the Sozo, so that you will have someone to pray with and hold you accountable (this person should not be who you consider your "best friend"). Also please email us any testimonies that might encourage others to seek out this type of healing ministry to churchonthesound.org. Thank you.

!

(PLEASE!CONTINUE!ON!BACK)!

!

!

!

Liability Release

I (name) _____ acknowledge that team members from Church On The Sound SOZO Ministry have voluntarily agreed to minister to me. I understand that this session is not a professional counseling meeting and that none of the team members are licensed counselors

I understand that Church On The Sound SOZO Ministry makes no charge for its services. I further state that I have voluntarily sought assistance of my own initiative and that I am under no obligation to accept or reject any of the advice or help that I might receive from the team members of this ministry.

Our team members offer biblical spiritual services to anyone who desires them. Although there is no charge for our services, all efforts to build this ministry support and train our team members are paid directly from the donations of those receiving these services. WE THEREFORE HAVE SUGGESTED A VOLUNTARY DONATION AMOUNT OF YOUR CHOICE. PLEASE MAKE DONATIONS PAYABLE TO COS. Your contributions to this ministry are greatly appreciated because they support our further development. However, please note that all giving is optional. Thank you!

I understand that if I receive ministry from Church On The Sound SOZO Ministry, the team is committed to respect the disclosed information, but not to complete confidentiality. The information, as needed, may be shared with other leaders of Church On The Sound SOZO Ministry so as to further your total healing process. This may include future meetings with spiritual mentors in the church to set appropriate boundaries for your personal and spiritual growth. Data may also be used in support of a Doctor of Ministry thesis project evaluating the effectiveness of Sozo. Data used in the thesis will protect the Sozo client's anonymity and confidentiality.

I agree to hold Church On The Sound SOZO Ministry and their team members free from any and all liability, loss or damage of any kind that may arise as a result from assistance, which I have received, or from my involvement with the SOZO Ministry.

Signature: _____ Print: _____

Date: _____

Pre\$ozo\$Survey\$

Name:!!_____ !!Date!_____ !

Question\$	Strongly\$ Disagree\$	Disagree\$	Neutral\$	Agree\$	Strongly\$ Agree\$
I often feel sad and find it difficult to snap out of it.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I sometimes see life as without purpose.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I am often discouraged about the future.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I often blame myself when things go wrong.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I tend to over react to situations.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I don't see myself valuable as a person.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I see little in the future to be hopeful about.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I sometimes feel that God does not accept me when I do wrong.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I feel that at times God has let me down.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I feel nurtured and cared for by God.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I find it difficult to forgive others.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I often feel wronged by others.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I sometimes feel jealous when others are blessed.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I feel my life would have been different if others had not mistreated me.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I can easily connect with God on a very intimate and personal level.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I sometimes feel that God loves others more than me.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I find it easy to unwind after a long day.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I often find myself worrying about events that I have no control over.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I get a sense of satisfaction when those that have wronged me get what they deserve.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
Forgiving someone who has harmed me makes me vulnerable to being hurt again.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!

Post Sozo Form and Post-Test Survey



Sozo!Experience!Questionnaire!

Name!of!Sozoe:!!_____!Date!of!Sozo:!!_____!

Team!Members:!!1st!_____!2nd!_____!3rd!_____!

1. !How!would!you!describe!your!Sozo!experience!:!
____!wonderful!!____!okay!!____!interesting!!____!traumatic!
2. !Were!there!any!issues!that!concerned!you!about!your!Sozo?!_____!

3. !Did!you!experience!a!personal!breakthrough!during!or!after!the!Sozo?:!
____!Yes!!____!No!

4. !How!would!you!describe!the!fruit!of!this!ministry!time?!!_____!

5. Were!the!ministry!team!members:!

A. Kind!and!understanding!in!their!interactions!with!you?:!

____!Yes!!____!No!!*Comment!Below!

B. Isafe!to!disclose!personal!hurts,!shame,!or!struggles!with?:!

____!Yes!!____!No!!*Comment!Below!

C. Knowledgeable!about!the!Sozo!process?:!

____!Yes!!____!No!!*Comment!Below!

6. Would!you!recommend!a!Sozo!experience!to!others?:!

____!Highly!recommended!

____!Would!suggest!changes!before!recommending*!

____!Not!at!all!

____!Unsure!of!others!needs!

*Any!Comments/Suggestions:!!_____!

____!!

!

Post\$ozo\$Survey\$

Name:!!_____!Date!_____!

Please\$respond\$based\$on\$your\$status\$now,\$directly\$following\$your\$ozo.\$

Question\$	Strongly\$ Disagree\$	Disagree\$	Neutral\$	Agree\$	Strongly\$ Agree\$
I often feel sad and find it difficult to snap out of it.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I sometimes see life as without purpose.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I am often discouraged about the future.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I often blame myself when things go wrong.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I tend to over react to situations.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I don't see myself valuable as a person.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I see little in the future to be hopeful about.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I sometimes feel that God does not accept me when I do wrong.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I feel that at times God has let me down.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I feel nurtured and cared for by God.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I find it difficult to forgive others.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I often feel wronged by others.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I sometimes feel jealous when others are blessed.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I feel my life would have been different if others had not mistreated me.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I can easily connect with God on a very intimate and personal level.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I sometimes feel that God loves others more than me.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I find it easy to unwind after a long day.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I often find myself worrying about events that I have no control over.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
I get a sense of satisfaction when those that have wronged me get what they deserve.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!
Forgiving someone who has harmed me makes me vulnerable to being hurt again.	!!	!!	!!	!!	!!

Sozo Field Notes Form

Sozo Notes Form

Date: _____ Sozo Client: _____

First Chair: _____ Second Chair: _____

Third chair (if applicable): _____

Instructions: This form is to aid the person sitting second chair in taking notes during the Sozo session. The accuracy of the notes is secondary to supporting Sozo session and should not interfere. After the session please take a few minutes during the debriefing to review these notes with the first chair (and third chair if one exists) and jot down any another relevant facts and/or observations. Please make sure each of you leaves with a copy of the notes. These notes are to be used to aid you during the focus group sessions.

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God? _____

Describe the client's relationship with:

Father: _____

Mother: _____

Spouse/friends: _____

Others: _____

Is the client in fellowship with other believers? _____

Do they attend church on a regular basis? _____

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life: _____

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough? _____

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough? _____

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)? _____

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity? _____

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they? _____

For more information about the study, please contact Dr. John Smith at (555) 123-4567 or via email at john.smith@researchinstitute.org.

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved? _____

For more information about the study, please contact Dr. John Smith at (555) 123-4567 or email him at john.smith@researchinstitute.org.

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first chair and third chair: _____

Attributes Measured by Survey Question

P	Attribute Measured	Question
1P	Depression	I often feel sad and find it difficult to snap out of it.
2P	Depression	I sometimes see life as without purpose.
3P	Depression	I am often discouraged about the future.
4P	Depression	I often blame myself when things go wrong.
5P	Anxiety	I tend to over react to situations.
6P	Anxiety / Depression	I don't see myself valuable as a person.
7P	Anxiety / Depression	I see little in the future to be hopeful about.
8P	Intimacy with God / Anxiety	I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.
9P	Intimacy with God	I sometimes feel that God does not accept me when I do wrong.
10P	Intimacy with God	I feel that at times God has let me down.
11P	Intimacy with God	I feel nurtured and cared for by God.
12P	Unforgiveness	I find it difficult to forgive others.
13P	Unforgiveness	I often feel wronged by others.
14P	Unforgiveness	I sometimes feel jealous when others are blessed.
15P	Unforgiveness	I feel my life would have been different if others had not mistreated me.
16P	Intimacy with God	I can easily connect with God on a very intimate and personal level.
17P	Intimacy with God	I sometimes feel that God loves others more than me.
18P	Anxiety	I find it easy to unwind after a long day.
19P	Anxiety	I often find myself worrying about events that I have no control over.
20P	Unforgiveness	I get a sense of satisfaction when those that have wronged me get what they deserve.
21P	Unforgiveness	Forgiving someone who has harmed me makes me vulnerable to being hurt again.

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. How effective were your sessions?
2. Are there specific tools that seem to be more or less effective?
3. Does the client's church history influence the effectiveness of the session?
4. What are the biggest challenges you have seen in *Sozo*?
5. What are some of the breakthroughs you witnessed. How did they come about?
6. Were there any areas where the person did not get free? Do you have any insight as to why?
7. How did *Sozo* trigger a breakthrough in their ability to hear from God?
8. Is there a relationship between hearing and getting free?
9. Once the client starts freely hearing is freedom almost always inevitable?
10. What are barriers to hearing? How do you get the client past that?
11. Any patterns to those who don't receive breakthrough?
12. Is there a correlation between forgiveness and breakthrough?
13. Post *Sozo* client feedback (if applicable).
14. How has being on the *Sozo* team impacted your life?

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Post-*Sozo* Client Interview Questions

1. Why did you schedule the *Sozo*?
2. What was your impression of *Sozo* when you registered?
3. What was the one thing you wanted to leave behind?
4. Were you able to leave the one thing (identified in previous question) behind as a result of the *Sozo*?
5. What did you hope to gain from your *Sozo* session?
6. How did *Sozo* help you get free from any wounds, lies, bondages from the past?
7. When in the session did this happen? What did you feel, see, etc. that led to the breakthrough?
8. Are there areas in your life where you did not experience breakthrough as a result of *Sozo*? What are they? Why do you think you might not have experienced breakthrough in that area?
9. Are you experiencing greater intimacy with God as a result of your *Sozo*?
10. Was your *Sozo* experience what you expected? How did your experience differ from your perception?
11. Overall, how beneficial was your *Sozo* session?

APPENDIX D

FIELD NOTES

Timothy Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Yes

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

Difficulty with Father not being there

With Mother?

Same as Father

With Spouse, friends?

not close

With others?

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

Yes

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

21 years church, Salvation army

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

Depression / heavy burdens

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

In the area of the occult, self-esteem issues

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Father Ladder (Jesus), 4 doors - hatred, fear, Occult breakthrough.

Back to Father ladder - breakthrough with Papa God - safe place

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Yes - open communication with the Godhead. An awareness of the Godhead's faithfulness

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Occult and generational curse broken

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

No

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

No

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

Sozo went from head knowledge to heart knowledge. The assurance that Godhead was faithful.

Diane Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Yes - had relationships, medium scale

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

God was distant at first but soon after renouncing and forgiving earthly Dad, God came running back and gives her a bear hug. Earthly Dad was distant

With Mother?

Guilt, called her selfish and she doesn't do anything for others. Had longing for Holy Spirit

With Spouse, friends?

Anxiety over spouse trust and relationship with other women. Jesus wanted her to know He loves her even when she feels alone. Guilt with brother, life choices released to Jesus as He walks with her brother into life (distant family)

With others?

Friends that didn't support move to NY. Boy that lied to her as youth pastors. Ouija board friend incident that opened door to fear and the power of occult in her life and family

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

Yes

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

Yes

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

Childhood - loneliness and disconnected

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

Fear, anxiety door closed. Belonging to Jesus even when others (parents) made her feel lonely and not responsible for others. Performance - He will love me regardless of her efforts

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Doors, father ladder. Occult door - breakthrough of fear of it. No power over her. Like arrows with suction cups that don't stick

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Ended up in secret place, childhood bedroom with all three members of Godhead. Good place to get stronger

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Getting rid of lies regarding provision, free, occult

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

Images of Father and Holy Spirit could be clearer. A lot was resolved

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

Think she needs to discover it during her journey with God.

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

Image of wolf coming out of her stomach - running out back where it came from. God filled her vacancy with the Holy Spirit

She felt husband was lacking spiritually and Jesus gave her a picture of a wall with holes and He was covering them

Ruth Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Unclear

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

Difficult because of his alcoholism and abuse of mom

With Mother?

OK

With Spouse, friends?

Self-described people pleaser. Reference being taken advantage of, used continually

With others?

Close relationship with grandmother

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

By all indications

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

Yes, but from church to church

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

Abusive father

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

She described heavy emotional burdens lifted off

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Wall, father ladder

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Relationship with Jesus certainly improved. Unclear about others

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

"Exchange" during Father ladder

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

We all agree the word that best describes her is unstable

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

Client has a lengthy history of weekly counseling, Heightened sensitivity to her shortcomings and inability to let go of memories of a life being mistreated

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

The wall tool resulted in a protracted always changing and emotionally charged graphic display. Took up half the session. It was interrupted at one point to break soul ties with 3 individuals who showed up there. This became a turning point, this and also forgiving father for abuses. Client entered seemingly hopeless. Most of session crying/sobbing and relating vivid memories and visions. Walls of concrete became plaster, became paper - it seemed good to us but resulted in wailing. Praise God she turned a corner and began releasing new found freedom and deliverance from a need to please others

Mario Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Yes

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

Good memories - father was in youth ministry. Had to share him with others

With Mother?

Good relationship with Mom

With Spouse, friends?

Youngest of 6 kids, got along well

With others?

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

Intimacy with Father, acceptance with Jesus, fear of failure

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Father ladder and 4 doors

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Father God went from at a distance to catching frogs together

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Renouncing lies that Jesus was like his brothers

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

No

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

Sozo went smoothly, no big issues. Got past a performance mindset. Encouraged by Holy Spirit to enter into greater intimacy

Ramona Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Yes

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

With Mother?

Mother committed suicide 30 years ago

With Spouse, friends?

Brother committed suicide 10 years ago

With others?

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

yes

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

yes

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

Suicide, worrying that her daughter would go down the same path

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

Worry and anxiety lifted - received Holy Spirit laughter. Never did that before

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Father ladder, forgiveness - towards brother / mother. Fear door

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Incredible intimacy - had an amazing encounter with the Godhead. Actually danced in the ballroom saw herself wearing a beautiful gown, in the Sozo room, had a crown laid on her head and she alone was chosen to dance with Papa, Jesus and Holy Spirit.

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Release of forgiveness, broke all ties of suicide from her family, especially her daughter

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

Rest - God took care of it all with laughter and PEACE AND JOY. Felt like she had slept for 6 hours, like a spa

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

An unusual Sozo, a first. The encounter she had was amazing and very easy. It only took one hour. Sandra translated in Spanish. It could not have been done without the translation. HOLY GHOST LAUGHTER SHAKING - First time it happened to her. She felt it was a gift.

Meghan Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Getting there

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

Distant

With Mother?

She didn't feel loved by her. Raised her from age 3. Felt her sister was favored over her. Meghan was the result of a union without love, her mom escaped her own father and married a man she did not love

With Spouse, friends?

Divorced, close friend is a spiritual mother to her

With others?

close to brother, distant to sister

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

Yes

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

Yes

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

Divorce, emotional abuse from husband

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

Forgiveness of self for past sins

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Breaking walls, exchange

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Began recognizing Jesus and Father's voice. At first could not see or hear any thing.

Left seeing and hearing and speaking in tongues

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Exchanging worry, fear for Jesus peace

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

No

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

She went from seeing "BLACK" to seeing each of the Godhead clearly. She heard Jesus say, "Listen with your heart" and that opened the floodgates

Helen Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Yes

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

Held her to impossible standards. Didn't get along. He divorced her mom.

With Mother?

Not very supportive, but seemed OK

With Spouse, friends?

Brother made fun of her. Friendships were strained

With others?

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

In a new church 2 weeks

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

We think so, after a period away

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

Abortion, sexual abuse

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

1. An area of forgiveness which at first she was unable even to consider. 2. Freedom for sexual bondage

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Four doors - breaking soul ties (taking authority, casting spirit out)

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Father God was originally a bright light. Ultimately He was a warm light extending arms to invite her into His embrace

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Uncertain

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

Not to my knowledge

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

In addition to Rachel's notes I want to note the sudden shift in demonic tactics. Demon recognized it was found out and we were forcing it to go. So it gave an appearance or resolution and calm and had her ask to leave, awaiting the session completed. Prior to session, God told me to, "Be the Key" for her. Even though I was second chair, God positioned me to be able to move in the area of deliverance. So I became a key. Jesus gave her another key to lock the sexual sin door which was her difficult choice. She "chose wisely" and this door disappeared

MaryAnn Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Yes - wants more

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

Worked for electric company. Still in Lebanon

With Mother?

Amazing Mom who sacrificed for children. Overprotective

With Spouse, friends?

Older siblings - has felt alone here in America

With others?

Went thru possessing the land - closed doors there.

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

Yes

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

Yes

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

Grew up in war zone in Middle East

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

fear

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

fear door

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Greater intimacy with Jesus - hugged Him

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Father Ladder - Jesus

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

Wants to get rid of insecurity and fear

Debbie Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Yes

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

With Mother?

With Spouse, friends?

With others?

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

Father figure and Dad

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Father Ladder and soul ties

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

Father God became clearer. Went from an outline and slowly saw more facial features. Eventually she sat in His lap. Saw Jesus go from being behind the throne to right next to her

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Father Ladder, walking through forgiveness

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

God told her laughter - she realized she can enjoy herself, doesn't have to be concerned with being so responsible. Survey numbers appear misleading. Walked through lots of forgiveness so her forgiveness numbers prior to the Sozo were a bad perception

Fred Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Good

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

Good

With Mother?

Good

With Spouse, friends?

Good

With others?

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

Yes

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

Yes

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

No

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

No areas where breakthrough needed

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

No discernible change

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

No

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

While Fred had no wounds, lies he was believing or unforgiveness, he did not experience any of the Trinity in any intimate way: could see none of them except at the end to say he saw "whiteness"

Maggie Field Notes

Does the client appear to have a healthy relationship with God

Not at first - on the throne wearing a white Robe. Father didn't protect Maggie when she was being molested by her uncle. If God didn't protect her then, is not protecting now. God can protect but will He?

Describe the client's relationship with Father?

With Mother?

With Spouse, friends?

Nasty divorce, bitterness and hatred. Lawyers court system

With others?

Jesus - standing in front with hands open. Thinks I'm a friend and forgiven (this happened after the 4 doors)

Is client in fellowship with other believers?

No

Do they attend church on a regular basis?

No

Areas of trauma, abuse in the client's life

Molestation as a child

In what areas did the client achieve breakthrough?

Maze was knocked down with a wrecking ball. That and self-hatred. Clean fresh water, new heart, crown with jewels

What tools seemed to aid in achieving breakthrough?

Self hatred door, fear door, Maze caused dead ends

How did their relationship with each of the Trinity change (or not)?

After God put His hand on her head for protection. Jesus told her she was a friend and forgiven. Hugged Jesus. Holy Spirit thinks she's gentle

What triggered the change in relationship with the Trinity?

Forgiveness. Handing off fear, surrendering. Walking thru forgiveness with being bullied. Nightmares with uncle

Were there issues / bondages that were not resolved? What were they?

Bitterness toward ex-husband and justice system. Didn't want to go there

Why do you think certain issues / bondages were not resolved?

A matter of Maggie not wanting to go there

In this section please record any notes, thoughts that are the result of your debriefing with your first and third chair?

After - "I'm like a new person. Solid experience, a new level of peace. Immersed in the middle of the Trinity"

Didn't want to leave that place

Saw that there was a clean slate after the maze was knocked down.

Struggled with anxiety. Did not cry one tear but her countenance changed
Divine editing occurred to break the childhood fear about uncle molesting her. Worry
leftover from that childhood

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